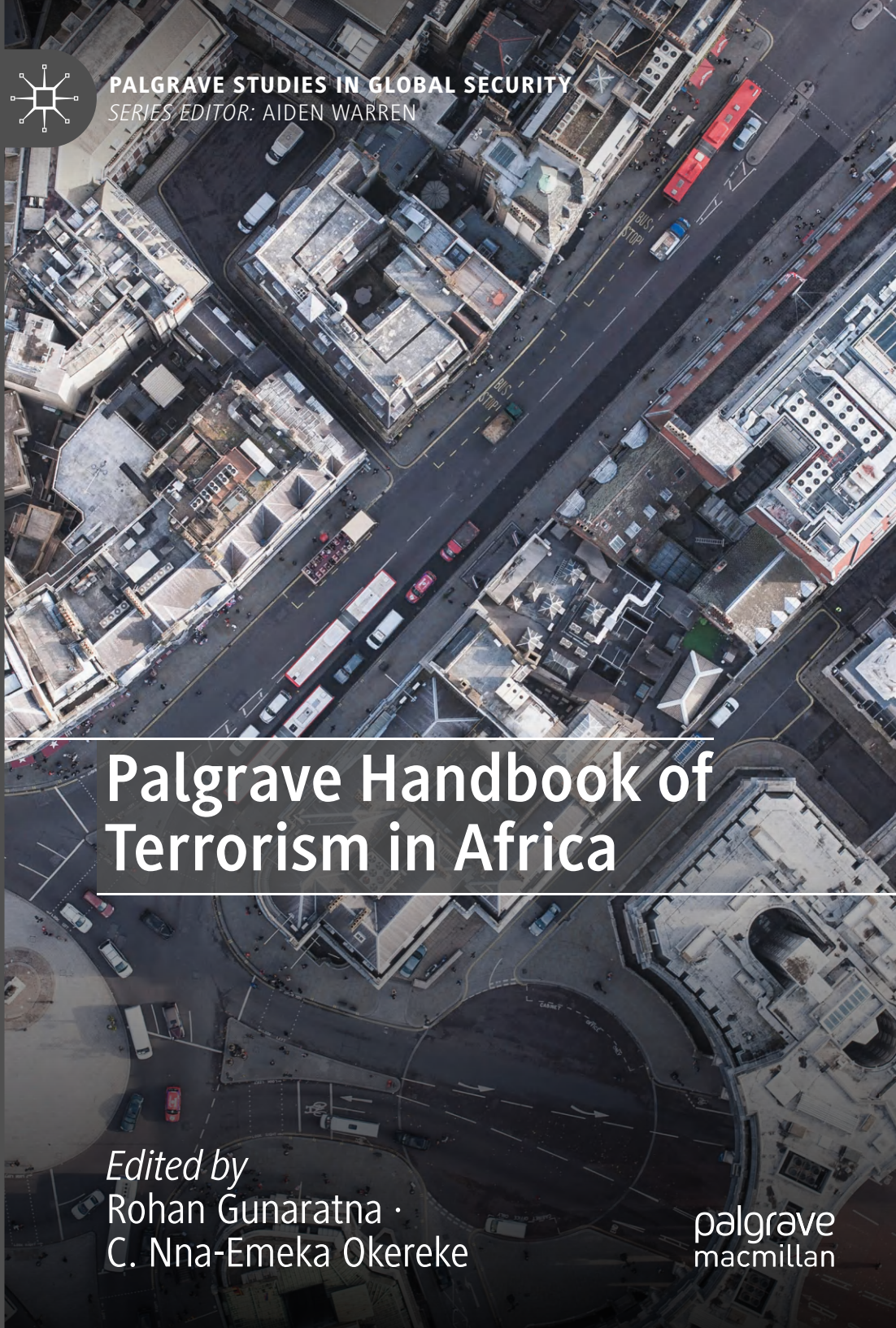

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN GLOBAL SECURITY
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Palgrave Handbook of Terrorism in Africa

Edited by
Rohan Gunaratna ·
C. Nna-Emeka Okereke

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Rohan Gunaratna · C. Nna-Emeka Okereke
Editors

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Editors
Rohan Gunaratna
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore, Singapore

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke
National Defence College
Abuja, Nigeria

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This book is dedicated to all victims of terrorism in Africa and the wider world. By this, we refer to all that have lost their lives and suffered various forms of injuries from acts of terrorism including their relatives and persons providing supports to victims of terrorism. We also dedicate this book to all individuals engaged in the fight against terrorism including those that have paid the ultimate price. Together, we shall work individual and in concert to exorcise the scourge of terrorism and make the world a safer place to live.

Foreword

The Palgrave Handbook of Terrorism in Africa by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and Dr. Emeka Okereke is a first time collaboration by two well-known terrorism experts. Dr. Gunaratna, whom I have known since 9/11, was one of the first credible post 9/11 al Qaeda researchers whose assessments were highly sought after by the United States and its allies as they formed their al Qaeda response. Along with Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Dr. Gunaratna was one of the first Senior Fellows at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, which I had the honour to establish (with General Wayne Downing) and Direct from 2002–2005. Dr. Okereke is a well-known and respected terrorism and counterterrorism expert whose two decades of specialised training, research and related engagement in terrorism studies in Africa and policy advisory roles makes him the ideal co-author of this book. The authors' goal for the book is to contribute towards broader understanding of the challenge of terrorism in Africa as building blocks to effective counterterrorism interventions.

This book assembles twenty-one country-specific Africa case studies and five regional Africa case studies as well as a chapter on trends and prognosis of terrorism in the continent, all written by African counterterrorism studies specialists. Their collective analysis confirms that nascent terrorist threats and operations in Africa originating in the late nineties in Algeria have steadily increased to consume approximately a third of the African continent. In the 90s The Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) and its spin off organisation, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat

(GSPC), which later evolved into Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) were the major violent extremist groups that threatened Algeria and its North African neighbours. In East Africa, and a precursor to 9/11, Al Qaeda attacked the embassies of the United States in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) on the seventh of August 1998 leading to the death of 224 persons including 12 Americans. These 90s terrorist events pale in comparison to the terrorist threat environment in Africa today. The 90s events were committed by Al Qaeda and its associated terrorists whose followings and areas of operation were relatively limited.

Major Terrorist Groups in Africa

The key deductions from the book indicate that the African continent faces more than eighteen active terrorist groups whose collective operations occur in fourteen African countries with another half dozen countries at risk. The major groups perpetrating act of terrorism in Africa include but not restricted to the Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and the Islamic State. Yet, there exists other smaller terrorist groups operating across Africa, several other smaller Islamist affiliated terrorist groups operate in Mozambique, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Kenya. A tacit account on these groups is presented below.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

The early GIA and GSPC evolved into AQIM which now initially operated across North Africa and subsequently in West Africa. A subsidiary of AQIM, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), along with its four subsidiaries (Ansar Dine, Macina Liberation Front (FLM), Al-Mourabitoun, and the Sahara Emirate of AQIM), is actively engaged in operations in Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Cote d' Ivoire.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram, which was a little noticed group of extremists in Northeast Nigeria in 2000 gradually emerged a major terrorist organisation and national security threat not only in Nigeria, but also in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The group's personnel strength and military capabilities enable it to confront major state military organisations and formations successfully on the battlefield in the post-Arab Spring era.

Al Shabaab Al Mujahidin

In East Africa, al Shabaab continues to operate in Somalia despite having been confronted by the militaries of Ethiopia, United States, and Kenya including the multiple counter al Shabaab deployments by the United Nations backed forces of the African Union known as the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Despite some recent AMISOM and US military successes, including US air interdiction strikes against high value targets of Al Shabaab leadership, the terror group continues to pose a threat to not only Somalia but to the entire East and Horn of Africa region, particularly to Kenya and to Ethiopia where al Shabaab terrorists operated briefly in 2022.

The Islamic State

The Islamic State (IS) is a relative newcomer to terrorist attacks in Africa following the group's emergence in Iraq and Syria in 2014. Although the activities of the IS may have been defeated in Iraq and Syria where it originated, the organisation has however expanded its influence in Africa through large-scale operations, particularly in areas where government control is limited.[1] The group remains active and visible in Libya, Sinai, Somalia, West Africa, and the Greater Sahara where the organisation seek to establish caliphate. Beyond these countries, the IS affiliates have further infiltrated other African countries especially Mozambique where it executes operations in the Cabo Delgado region as well as South Africa which has become IS financial clearing house.[2]

Lord's Resistance Army

The "Lord's Resistance Army" (LRA), a pseudo-Christian based terrorist group that has operated in remote areas in northern Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one outlier, that their activities have not been heard much in

[1] United States Department of States, "Designation of ISIS Organisers and Financial Facilitators based in South Africa" 1 March 2022, https://www.state.gov/designation-of-isis-organizers-and-financial-facilitators-based-in-south-africa/ (accessed 30 June 2023).

[2] *Ibid*.

the past few years as sustained counterterrorism offensives and the emergence of the Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP) seems to have dwarfed its existence. Recent reports indicate that the LRA is now a much smaller organisation and operates almost exclusively in the Central Africa Republic. Joseph Kony, the LRA's quixotic leader has been on many countries' "most wanted" lists for two decades. However, sometimes referred to as "the one who got away," he is yet to be captured or confirmed dead.[3]

Why Terrorist Groups Have Succeeded in Africa

There exists a consensus of opinion among the authors and chapter contributors that the past twenty years have witnessed a dramatic increase in terrorist groups in Africa. The Al Qaeda and Islamic State which escaped defeats in the Middle East shifted their theatres of operation to Africa where they continue to reed havoc on the continent. In addition, previously small and locally organised terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and Al Shabaab, who respectively conducted operations in Nigeria and Somalia, are now capable of conducting out of area operations against regular military formations. Yet, despite the sometimes successful military interventions by the US, France, Ethiopia, and UN forces in vulnerable and threatened theatres within Africa, terrorist groups on the continent continue to expand their influence and territory.

Perhaps the most important feature of the *Palgrave Handbook of Terrorism in Africa* is the consensus among the authors and chapter contributors about the reasons for the increases in terrorist groups and operations on the African continent. Among the most frequently noted reasons are porous borders, ungoverned areas, corruption, lack of basic services, poverty and youth bulge, and unconstitutional changes in government to name a few.

[3] Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect, "Central Africa" (The Lord's Resistance Army) 2 April 2022, https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/central-africa-the-lords-resistance-army/ (accessed 30 June 20223).

Porous Borders

The porous nature of Africa's borders, which owes their origin to the way colonialists carved up the African continent as well as the effects of border management by post-colonial African states, has become a serious issue for African governments facing terrorist threats. Porous borders enable fighters, weapons, to easily flow across countries and between regions in Africa.[4] In addition to easier movement of fighters and weapons, the persistence of porous borders also facilitates illicit cross-border trafficking such as human and commodities trafficking provide funding that fuels terrorism.[5]

Ungoverned Spaces

Several of the book's authors note that for two reasons "ungoverned spaces," which are large areas of territory where formal governments have little influence or presence, are contributing factors to terrorist activity. First, ungoverned spaces provide safe havens for terrorists to operate. Second, without governance, services such as law enforcement, healthcare, and other social welfare services are lacking or not available at all. In the absence of government-led welfare services, terrorist organisations often fill the vacuum and provide the services governments do not.[6] The implication is that several citizens sometimes tend to switch loyalty and allegiance away from the state in support of the terrorist organisations providing the services.

[4] United Nations Meeting Coverage and Press Releases, "Speakers warn Security Council Terrorism Spreading across Africa at Alarming Rate, Calls for Greater Support, Enhanced International, Regional Cooperation" at 9296th Meeting, SC/15245, 28 March 2023. https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15245.doc.htm#:~:text=situation%20in%20Africa.-,Despair%2C%20poverty%2C%20hunger%2C%20lack%20of%20basic%20services%2C%20unemployment,terrorist%20groups%20across%20the%20continent (accessed 30 June 2023).

[5] Fidel Amakye Owusu, "Africa's Porous Borders Promote Transnational Crimes Rather than Deeper Integration" NE Global, 16 March 2023, https://www.neglobal.eu/africas-porous-borders-promote-transnational-crimes-rather-than-deeper-integration/ (accessed 30 June 2023).

[6] Mitch Downey, "Did the War on Terror Deter Ungoverned Spaces? Not in Africa" *Journal of Development Economics*, Volume 151, June 2021, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387821000274 (accessed 30 June 2023).

Corruption

Corruption is pervasive on the African continent. Several types of corruption combine to exacerbate citizen distrust in government which prompts many to find a governance alternative by joining and working for a terrorist group. Many of the book chapters identified various manifestation of corruption which include bribery, patronage, nepotism and cronyism, and electoral fraud. Yet, although corruption is not unique to Africa, African corruption remains pervasive and among the world's most severe. This assertion is authenticated by the data from Transparency International which indicate that six African countries are rated as "extremely corrupt" (scores under 20) and another 35 are considered "very corrupt" (scores 20–39); only Botswana emerges as a member of the "slightly corrupt" group, and no African country is among the "least corrupt" group which includes most of the economically advanced world.[7]

From a counterterrorism perspective, corruption in the security services is the most egregious. For example, based on interviews in 34 African countries in 2019/2021, Afrobarometer, a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network, identified continuing patterns of distrust and high levels of perceived police corruption in more than half of African countries.[8] The two most common forms of police corruption are: (1) The misuse of authority by using excessive force or engaging in racial profiling; (2) Bribery involving police officers accepting money or gifts in exchange for favours or special treatment. In general terms, military organisations are better respected in Africa than their police counterparts. However, military organisations and officers are not immune from corruption. Common types of corruption undertaken by the military include misappropriation of funds, embezzlement, and maintaining fake payrolls of non-existent (ghost) soldiers. The Forbes magazine notes that:

[7] Barney Warf, "Geography of African Corruption" *PSU Research Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2017, pp. 20–38, https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-12-2016-0012 or https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/PRR-12-2016-0012/full/html (accessed 30 June 2023).

[8] Pauline M. Wambua, "Police Corruption in Africa Undermines Trust, but Support for Law Enforcement Remains Strong" *Afrobarometer Dispatch* No. 56, 2 November 2015, https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ab_r6_dispatchno56_police_corruption_in_africa.pdf (accessed 30 June 2023).

In several countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Uganda, salary scams including 'ghost soldiers'- troops who do not exist but are paid nonetheless—have taken money from the public purse. In Uganda alone, ghost soldiers have cost an estimated $324 million over the past two decades.[9]

A strong counterterrorism effort by government is hampered greatly if a country's citizens do not trust the nation's security services. It is only worse if citizens trust terrorists more than those police and military personnel who are sworn to protect them.

Poverty

Most counter-terrorist specialists, me included, do not consider poverty to be a root cause of terrorism.[10] However, poverty that can't be addressed by government services can be a great terrorist recruiting enticement, particularly for the teeming population of Africa's unemployed youths. Africa faces two major poverty challenges, which are not mutually exclusive. First, poverty rates in Africa are unprecedented. According to a *Statista Report* in 2022, around 431 million of the 1.2 billion people in Africa were living in extreme poverty, with the poverty threshold at 1.90 United States dollars a day. Unfortunately, the number of poor on the continent has increased recently compared to the previous years.[11] This high poverty rate is exacerbated by the fact that the most vulnerable socio-economic poverty group are youth which can't find employment. "Youth bulge" is a demographic pattern term describing the situation when an overly large share of country's population is composed of children and

[9] Peter Guest, "Ghost Soldiers and Overpaid Jets: How the Arms Industry Fuels Corruption" in *Forbes Magazine,* 19 January 2016, https://www.forbes.com/sites/peteguest/2016/01/19/ghost-soldiers-and-overpriced-jets-how-the-arms-industry-fuels-corruption/ (accessed 30 June 2023).

[10] Avrahan Jager, "Does Poverty Cause Terrorism" International Institute for Counter-terrorism, IDC Herzliya, March 2018, https://www.ict.org.il/images/Does%20Poverty%20Cause%20Terrorism.pdf (accessed 30 June 2023).

[11] Saidaddin Galai, "Number of People Living in Extreme Poverty in Africa 2016–2027" *Statistica* 28 April 2023, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1228533/number-of-people-living-below-the-extreme-poverty-line-in-africa/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20around%20431%20million,1.90%20U.S.%20dollars%20a%20day (accessed 30 June 2023).

young adults. It also includes the high numbers of unemployed young people.[12] Youth bulge is a term particularly suited for the continent:

> Africa has a median age of 19.7 years, the youngest population in the world. By 2050, one in three young people will live in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, there is a mismatch between this young population and available opportunities. Each year about 10 million to 12 million people enter the labour market while only about 3 million formal jobs are created.[13]

Unconstitutional Changes in Government

Africa's statistics in relation to Unconstitutional Changes in Government are difficult to find in a standard format suitable for spreadsheet analysis. The following statistics, which are in some cases dated and not mutually exclusive, do give the reader an idea of the unprecedented number of unconstitutional changes in government on the African continent. For example, between 1961 and 1997, Africa experienced 78 unconstitutional changes of government.[14] "Between 1952 and 2014 there were 91 successful coups in Africa, and prior to 1990s, coups had become the main mode of political contestation and leadership change in the majority of African states."[15] In Africa, military coups, tenure prolongation through constitutional amendment by sitting presidents, manipulating the political system to facilitate father-to-son succession and rigging elections by incumbent governments or their refusal to concede defeat are examples

[12] Africa Defense Forum, "Experts Say 'Youth Bulge' Can Promote Security and Prosperity in Africa" 23 August 2022, https://adf-magazine.com/2022/08/experts-say-youth-bulge-can-promote-security-and-prosperity-in-africa/#:~:text=The%20term%20%E2%80%9Cyouth%20bulge%E2%80%9D%20refers,youngest%20population%20in%20the%20world (accessed 30 June 2023).

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] file:///C:/Users/Russell/Downloads/No-44.-Unconstitutional-Changes-of-Government-in-Africa.pdf.

[15] Solomon Ayele Dersso, "Unconstitutional Changes of Government and Unconstitutional Practices in Africa" *African Politics African Peace,* World Peace Foundation, Paper No. 2, 2 June 2016, https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2017/07/2.-UCG-Dersso-f.pdf (accessed 30 June 2023).

of unconstitutional changes in government.[16] Recent trend of unconstitutional changes in government in Africa are not encouraging:

> There has been a string of military takeovers in Africa in the last two years. Since August 2020, power has changed hands unconstitutionally six times in five countries: Burkina Faso (January 2022), Sudan (October 2021), Guinea (September 2021), Chad (April 2021), and Mali (August 2020 and May 2021). Two other African countries saw thwarted coup attempts in this period, Niger in March 2021 and Guinea-Bissau in January 2022, the latter of which led to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deploying a force to the country.[17]

In addition to the above, Burkina Faso further experienced two more coups in January and September 2022 which were not added to the above records. Constitutional changes in government give citizens a voice which can be a powerful weapon when they support their government's counterterrorism efforts. Without a voice, citizens are left with few options other than to react to what the unconstitutionally formed government tells them to do. However, one option available to citizens without a voice in their government, is to join the opposition, which in Africa's case, could be a terrorist group.

Conclusion

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, voiced his particular concern over the terrorist situation in Africa. In his words, "No age, no culture, no religion, no nationality and no region are immune" to terrorism. He observed that "across the {African} continent, despair, poverty, hunger, lack of basic services, unemployment, and unconstitutional changes in government continue to lay fertile ground

[16] J. Shola Omotola, "Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa: What Implications for Democratic Consolidation" Discussion Paper 70, Nordiska Africain Institutet (NAI), Upsalla 2011, https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:478511/FULLTEXT01.pdf (accessed 30 June 2023).

[17] United Nations Security Council Report, "In Hindsight: The Security Council and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa" July 2022 Monthly Forecast, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-07/in-hindsight-the-security-council-and-unconstitutional-changes-of-government-in-africa.php (accessed 30 June 2023).

for the expansion of terrorist groups and the flow of fighters, funds, and weapons."[18] There is no doubt that the team of counterterrorism scholars and experts assembled by Dr. Gunaratna and Dr. Okereke have succeeded in the goal for their book to contribute towards broader understanding of the challenge of terrorism. Hopefully, it is therefore my belief that their further goal of providing building blocks to effective counterterrorism interventions will be met after those who are charged building the effective counterterrorism blocks, read the book.

One note of optimism and a suggestion for the authors to consider for their next book is a study of ISIS and al Qaeda competition. The groups have different international goals and objectives that are particularly divisive in Africa. Perhaps an effective counterterrorism strategy would be to aggravate their competition!!

It is in light of the above that I consider this book useful and timely especially coming at a time of growing sustained offensives by terrorist groups in Africa despite the numerous counterterrorism interventions and renewed search for measures to mitigate the terrorist threats in the continent. Through its detailed historical sophistication, robust reflections on the trends and prognosis of the terrorist challenge in Africa, this book provides the useful addition to knowledge that will deepen understanding needed for policy and strategy on tackling terrorism in Africa.

Tempe, US
June 2023

Brigadier General Russell Howard (Rtd.)

[18] United Nations Meeting Coverage, Op. Cit. https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15245.doc.htm (accessed 30 June 2023).

Preface

Of the daunting security challenges confronting the world since the last decade of the twentieth Century, the scourge of terrorism remains pronounced. After the Al Qaeda attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya on August 7, 1998, Africa has emerged as the new *Centre of Gravity* for global terrorism. The rise of terrorism, violence, extremism, and exclusivism espoused by Salafi-jihadi fraternity present a long-term threat to the security and stability of the world. The individuals and organisations actively recruit and radicalise vulnerable population for global, regional, national, and local terrorism.

The decision to write this book was informed by the need to embark on a foundational literature on Africa's experience of terrorism. This became imperative following the escalations of terrorism across the continent despite the adoption of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa since July 1999 alongside various other regional and national counterterrorism instruments. Even the various extra-continental counterterrorism partnerships with major global actors have not succeeded to curb the terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Africa as demonstrated by the emergence and spread of both active and sleeper cells of terrorist organisations on the continent. More details about the various rampaging threat groups are delineated in the book.

Today, threat groups have demonstrated that they can reach any part of the African continent. With no Africa-wide plan either by the international or the regional community, Africa has emerged as sanctuary for the Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and their affiliates. They have established cells, networks, and provinces across the continent. The transnational threats posed by these entities adapt to new technologies to propagate their extremist narratives and also publicising their acts of violence and terrorism. Baseline statistics from highly ranked global think-tanks on terrorism studies like the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) ranks various countries of the Sahel, Lake Chad basin, and Horn of Africa as major terrorism ravaged countries in the world in terms of number of incidents and fatalities. There has also been a resurgence of terrorism in the North African countries of Egypt and Libya since the Arab Spring. Both affiliates of the Al Qaeda and Islamic State have continued to launch terrorist attacks against the society and state. For the Southern Africa region previously considered largely immune from terrorism, Mozambique has since 2017 assumed centre stage of terrorism attacks. Cabo Delgado region became the most threatened jurisdiction.

This volume examines the dynamics of threat in Africa focusing on regional and country-specific analysis of terrorism. It identifies the most threatened countries on the continent. Some central trends captured in the book that aid the spread of terrorism include the existence of porous borders across the continent which are largely under-patrolled. The state syndrome characterised by weak and ineffective institutions and the proliferation of Small Arms and light Weapons (SALWs) in Africa are discussed.

The challenge of terrorism in Africa deepened. The nature of politics in several states in post-colonial Africa is often characterised by exclusion, repressions, and corruption resulting in several instances to armed conflicts and wars. The Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in September 2001 galvanised threat groups in Africa. The outbreak of the Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) especially the overthrow of the Gadhafi regime in Libya by rebels backed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) further contributed to the escalation of terrorism across Africa. These developments are discussed in various chapters of the book.

Although there exist various isolated articles on terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Africa, there scarcely a single document that conducts a dedicated interrogation of the challenge of terrorism in Africa. This book

is therefore designed to serve as a veritable handbook that adequately captures the major trends and dynamics associated with the threats of terrorism in Africa. It provides the reader with sufficient historical and empirical analysis with sufficient insights on the terrorism in Africa. The various contributors were mostly drawn from Africa-based scholars, counterterrorism experts and seasoned professionals who have informed opinions on the subject matter and who drew insights from their respective professional experiences having travelled and worked in the various countries across the continent and beyond.

These attributes significantly equipped them with the competences to participate objectively in the project. It is therefore gratifying to have Africans living and working in Africa reflect and present analysis of terrorism as it manifests on the continent. We are therefore excited that the Palgrave Macmillan, a globally ranked publisher, graciously accepted the proposal leading to the publication of this book which is evidently the most comprehensive and up-to-date study of terrorism in Africa and a fulfilment of a long sought need to contribute to understanding the challenge of terrorism in Africa in the manner that could boost counterterrorism engagements on the continent. It is our belief that the book will provides a rich background to understanding the threat landscape and further provide a vast array of information that could strengthen counterterrorism engagements in the continent in particular and the entire world in general.

Singapore, Singapore — Rohan Gunaratna
Abuja, Nigeria — C. Nna-Emeka Okereke
November 2024

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we thank God for the gift of life and good health till date and the wisdom, strength, and resilience to embark and complete this book. We received tremendous support from our families and several other quarters which enabled us to devote time to the rigorous processes associated with the production of this book. To this effect, we express special appreciation to family, Dr. Aniefiok, Obiefuna, Jideofor, and Obidike as well as Upali and Chitra Gunaratna. Your kind understanding and support remains encouraging.

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We are also grateful to the authorities of the National Defence College Nigeria and the ICPVTR which have provided us the institutional affiliation under which we carry out our policy and scholarly engagements. We also appreciate Russ Howard and Bankole Adeoye for

providing us with the foreword while Clio Evelina Grana, Clifford Gere, and Keerthi Martyn contributed by proof reading the draft manuscripts. I will also not forget to mention the useful periodic interventions by Dr Obiefuna Okoli especially when the going gets tough.

At this juncture, we consider it worthwhile to express appreciation to Abdoulaye Maiga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mali, Brigadier General Abdoulaye Cisse, Ambassador Caetano Jose Francesco Madeira, Colonel Larry Gbevlo-Lartey, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaye and Ambassador Isaac Ochieng for their high-level supports in terrorism research and studies across Africa over the years. Others are Idriss Mounir Lallali, Emanuel Muoaya Pouyi, Richard Apau, Elias Benyu, and Moise Leckiby at the African Union Counterterrorism Centre (AUCTC), Algiers, as well as Umaru Muazu, Jeffrey Isima, and Idrissa Ouattara of the Intergovernmental Action Group Against Money Laundering (GIABA) Dakar. The critical insights and professional networks you provided contributed immensely to the success of this volume. We also appreciate Professor Usman Tar, Professor Hassan Saliu, Professor Aloysius Okolie, and J. Tor Tsuwa of the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) for their support and encouragement.

It is very important that we acknowledge the support provided by the staff of Palgrave Macmillan whose constant reminders and scrutiny kept us going. Specifically, Hemapriya Eswanth and Angie Merilla took turns at different times to drive this project while Madhubala Vindan and Preetha Kuttiappan joined to enhance quality control. You all contributed in no small way towards the successful completion of this book.

Rohan Gunaratna
C. Nna-Emeka Okereke

Praise for *Palgrave Handbook of Terrorism in Africa*

"Terrorism and violent extremism is a twin challenge defying effective response not only in Africa but also on the global stage. For the African Union and member states, countering terrorism and violent extremism remains on top of our agenda for promoting peace and security in the continent. To this end, we are sparing no efforts to work closely with the United Nations and partners to ensure a well-coordinated, comprehensive and robust response. The role of non-state actors is even more critical.

The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission has therefore decided to mainstream the knowledge approach together with the nexus lens of security, climate change adaptation, development and governance in order to effectively tackle these threats. This is why I have accepted to provide the foreword for this publication, for it represents a good initiative by some African researchers to contribute to our efforts towards a better understanding and improved strategizing to tackle the challenge.

While we may not necessarily agree with all that is shared in the publication, nonetheless it can serve as a rich source of reference material for appreciating the complexities of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa and how to sharpen our approaches in countering same effectively. I therefore recommend this book to both practitioners and researchers.

Hopefully with continued peer review, it will help provide additional rich inputs into national, regional, continental and global levels policy making, particularly, policy improvement."

—Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, *African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, African Union Commission Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October 2022*

BLURB

Africa is emerging as the global epicentre of conflict and terrorism. With the rise of religious exclusivism and extremism, Africa is the most affected continent by violence and militancy. To mitigate the extant and emerging threat, it is imperative to shift from counter terrorism and counter insurgency cooperation to collaboration and partnership. Governments and partners should build common database, exchange personnel, conduct joint training and operations, share expertise, resources, technology and experience. In addition to strengthening the kinetic and lethal capabilities, governments should work with in the religious, educational, and information domains. To counter the vicious ideologies, the religious institutions should work with the educational establishments to train, retrain and certify the religious clerics to promote moderation, toleration and coexistence. A deep knowledge and build greater understanding of the developments in the African continent, the Handbook of Terrorism in Africa is the most comprehensive and up-to-date study to guide those interested in the future of Africa.

—Rohan Gunaratna

The terrorist discourse has a complicated history in Africa. In the independence era, the definition of a terrorist represented a murky area which included liberation fighters or those challenging the state from a space that was not considered legitimate. Contemporary manifestations of terrorism in Africa, have however taken a different form. It is transnational, leaves behind a higher civilian casualty count and in some cases, incorporates an extremist ideological grounding which sometimes includes the deliberate misuse of religious texts. This book presents a timely and important collection of chapters which expands on these historical experiences and tracks the current development of the terrorist phenomenon in Africa. The inclusion of specific country case studies that represent all five regions of the continent not only illustrates the heterogeneous nature of some terrorist groups within states but also shows how, in some cases, groups are linked across various states either on the continent or beyond.

These discussions not only provide rich detail which facilitates a better understanding of these groups but presents an important reflection on the impact of terrorism on the peace and security landscape in Africa. Importantly, by unpacking the various experiences, one is also left with a better impression of how to address the problem in a way that incorporates the historical and socio-political contexts. It is increasingly clear that heavily militarized responses to terrorism yield limited results with a number of casualties on both sides. As explained in various parts of the book, causal factors represented by historical grievances, governance deficits, security vacuums and porous borders requires a more holistic approach which involves both the state and the citizenry. The transnational nature of the threat also means that regional cooperation is crucial.

As the title of this book suggests, the content contained in these pages' forms part of an important compendium or reference point for scholars, practitioners and decision-makers to consult when confronted with the complex topic of terrorism in Africa. It is a relevant and valuable contribution to the body of knowledge on one of the problems positioned at the centre of Africa's contemporary security challenges.

—Dr. Vasu Gounden (Founder and Executive Director, ACCORD)

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Notes on Contributors

Ibifubara Abbiyesuku is an Assistant Lecturer with the Department of History and International Diplomacy at the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in History and Diplomacy from the University of Port Harcourt and a Master of Arts (M.A) degree in Peace and Security Studies from the University of Ibadan, (Nigeria). Prior to joining the Rivers State University, she did her National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) with the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College (CSRS-NDC) Abuja (Nigeria). Ibifubara belongs to professional associations such as the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) and the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP).

Fafali Alai is currently interns with the Women, Peace and Security Institute (WPSI) of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) where she assists with research and programme management. She holds a Master of Arts Degree in Gender, Peace, and Security from the KAIPTC and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Chinese from the University of Ghana. She has a great interest in matters pertaining to Women, Peace, and Security spanning from Gender-Based Violence to emerging security issues including violent extremism and terrorism in Africa. She aspires to contribute to knowledge in these areas while building a career in development work with focus on gender.

Richard Barno earned a Bachelor of Law (LL. B) degree from the University of Nairobi and a Master of Arts (M.A) degree in Managing Security in Africa from the Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. Presently, he is the Advisor, Legal and Constitutional Affairs at the Presidency in Nairobi, Kenya. Prior to his current role as Advisor to the President, he acquired over 20-year experience in a career spanning criminal law practice, government service, research and advocacy in a continental think tank and Intergovernmental service. He served as the Head of Counter Terrorism at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development IGAD with emphasis on the IGAD Security Sector program, (ISSP). Richard was with the pioneer team of the IGAD Capacity Building Against Terrorism (ICPAT), a regional initiative jointly run by IGAD to support the counter terrorism capacity building efforts of IGAD Member States. A huge part of his task in IGAD included ensuring that counter terrorism efforts were carried out within a legislative and human rights framework. He rose to serve as the Director of the Conflict Early Warning Mechanism of IGAD. Before joining IGAD, he worked as a counter terrorism analyst in the Kenyan Civil Service. He also practised Law in Nairobi as an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya.

Danladi Elvis Bot *ctfndu* is a Senior Research Fellow at the National Defence College Nigeria, with specialisation in International Security, Strategic Studies, and Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSR&G). Dr. Bot got his PhD in Political Science from the University of Jos, Nigeria and is a Counterterrorism Fellow of the National Defence University (NDU), Washington DC, USA. He has published in learned journals and books, nationally and internationally.

Anneli Botha is a senior lecturer at the Department Political Studies and Governance at the University of the Free State in South Africa. She also serves as an independent consultant on radicalization, deradicalisation, reintegration and terrorism in Africa and worked on a number of projects with the Finn Church Aid (FCA) and different UN agencies. During the period 2003 till 2016 she worked as a senior researcher on terrorism at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria, South Africa. Anneli has travelled extensively throughout Africa where she conducted research on terrorism and delivered specialised training on various aspects of the threat of terrorism, extremism, radicalisation and counterterrorism to law enforcement and criminal justice officials. Prior to her position at the ISS, she served in the South African Police Service (SAPS) for 10 years. She

was a founding member of the Religious Extremism and Terrorism Desk at Crime Intelligence Head Office and also served in the Rapid Reaction Unit and the Special Task Force on Urban Terror in the West Cape. At the end of her career in the SAPS, she provided strategic support to the Head of South Africa's Crime Intelligence Unit. Anneli holds a Magister Artium degree from Rand Afrikaans University in Political Studies ('98) and Philosophiae Doctor from the Department of Political Studies and Governance at the University of the Free State ('14).

Fiifi Edu-Afful is a Senior Research Fellow at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). He also serves as a Faculty Member on the MA Programme in Defence and International Politics at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFCSC). He has nearly 10 years' experience authoring, teaching, and facilitating on conflict, peace, and security. Furthermore, he has also served as a lead facilitator and consultant for the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT/CAERT). He is a 2013 laureate for the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar Senegal. He has authored several academic works on peace and security and is currently undertaking research on inclusive peacebuilding and peacekeeping exit frameworks, Domestic Security Implication of UN peacekeeping, improving Response Capacities to Terrorism and Border Management.

Greg Fah Fombo is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at the University of Bamenda, Northwest region of Cameroon. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Science (M.Sc.) degrees in Political Science from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka with specialisation in International Relations. In addition, he has a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in History from the University of Yaounde, Cameroon. In 2020, he was appointed the Associate Dean, Faculty of Law and Political Science at the University of Bamenda. Dr. Fombo has published several articles on Cameroon-Nigeria relations.

Hassan Abdullahi Guhad served with the Kenya Police for 14 years where he spent seven years in counterterrorism investigations. Subsequently, he worked with African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Police as a Counterterrorism Trainer before joining UNMAS in Somalia as a consultant. He is also a certified Counterterrorism practitioner by the Certified Counterterrorism Practitioner Board (CCTP). Hassan has

Bachelors Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the University of South Africa and a Masters in International Relations from the University of Nairobi, Kenya where he is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Political science and Public Administration. His Dissertation topic is titled "Of Differentiated Interest and The Duality of Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Somalia." His research interests include terrorism and counterterrorism, geopolitics, political economy, comparative politics and strategic studies.

Professor Rohan Gunaratna is a threat specialist of the global security environment. Professor Gunaratna has over 30 years of academic, policy, and operational experience in national and international security. A Professor of Security Studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, he founded the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. At the invitation of the Ministry of Defence of Indonesia in 2019, he designed ASEAN Our Eyes, the regional counter terrorism intelligence network. He received his Masters from the University of Notre Dame where he was Hesburgh Scholar and doctorate from the University of St Andrews where he was British Chevening Scholar. The author of the international bestseller "Inside al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror" (Columbia University Press) and coauthor "Three Pillars of Radicalisation: Needs, Narratives and Networks" (Oxford University Press), Gunaratna edited the Insurgency and Terrorism Series of the Imperial College Press, London. As a trainer for national security agencies, law enforcement authorities, and military counter terrorism units, he was consultant to Detainee Task Force 134 in Iraq and Joint Task Force 435 in Afghanistan. Since his first visit to Libya on vacation in 1978, he returned to Africa's north, east, west, and south to build government capacity to mitigate threats. He interviewed terrorists and insurgents in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and other conflict zones. A former Senior Fellow at the United States Military Academy at West Point and at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Gunaratna was invited to testify on the structure of al Qaeda before the 9/11 Commission. Admiral William McRaven appointed him to the International Senior Advisory Panel of the U.S. Special Operations Command. For advancing international intelligence cooperation, Gunaratna received the Major General Ralph H. Van Deman Award.

Felix Ikalewumi is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja. He attended Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko, Ondo State (2006–2010) where he obtained B.A History & International Studies; National Open University (2013–2014), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, (2014–2016) Master in History & International Studies. Felix is currently a PhD student at the Department of History and War Studies, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna.

Henry Kam Kah is an Associate Professor of History and Acting Head, Department of History and African Civilisations at the University of Buea, Southwest Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (1996) and Master of Arts (1998) degrees in History from the University of Buea. In 2012, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in History also from the University of Buea. His areas of research interests centre on conflict and terrorism studies, peacebuilding, gender, and culture.

James Kamotho currently works a consultant researcher specialising in environmental management, climate change, insecurity, terrorism, and conflict. He holds a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Environmental Studies from the Kenyatta University and a Master of Science (M.Sc) degree in Development Studies from St. Paul's University, Limuru. His area of interest is the nexus between climate change and conflicts, violence and terrorism, particularly in the Horn of Africa region. He has previously worked for an International Development Research Centre (IDRC) research project under a consortium of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development-Continental Early Warning (IGAD-CEWARN), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Consulting House that researched on building resilience to conflicts, violence, and disasters in the Great Lakes region. He enjoys reading, travelling, and playing darts.

Charlotte Mafumbo is with the Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies at the Makerere University Kampala and an Academic Director for the Uganda Global Development Studies programme in Uganda for the School for International Training. She is also an adjunct lecturer at the Police Senior Commander and Staff College (Uganda: Bwebajja), International Supervisor of doctoral students at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University,

and also an International Examiner (Department of Political Studies) University of Cape Town. Dr Charlotte holds a PhD from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, an MA in International Studies from the University of Sydney, Australia; a Postgraduate Certificate in Gender and Conflict Studies from Hannover University, Germany; a postgraduate diploma in social conditions and policies from Copenhagen University; and a Bachelor of Arts in History and International Organization from Makerere University in Kampala. She completed a fellowship as a 2012 Global South Scholar at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. Her outreach work has included, training security forces at regional and national level. At the East African Community, she trains for the East African Peace and Security Department on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 to partner states police and prisons forces.

Walter Gam Nkwi is an Associate Professor with the Department of History, Universities of Buea, Cameroon and Leiden, The Netherlands. Dr Nkwi holds a PhD in Social History and Social Anthropology from the University of Leiden, and Masters from the University of Buea. He also worked as the Faculty Officer in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, University of Buea as well as the Post Graduate Coordinator of the Department of History, University of Buea. He is presently holding a tenure track position with the Institute of History, University of Leiden. He is also an editor with Spears Media publishing house, Denver, North America as well as Langaa Publishing Common Initiative Group, Cameroon. Dr Nkwi is a member to many academic and research associations. Among these organisations are: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA); European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC); West African Research Association (WARA); International Society of Oral Literature in Africa (ISOLA); International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (IISH); Fellow Community Member of the African Studies Center, (ASC) Leiden, The Netherlands since 2011.

Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya is a Senior Fellow in the Directorate of Research, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Nigeria where he also serves as the Programme Officer/Acting Deputy Chief Operating Officer (Administration), in the Political Parties' Leadership and Policy Development Centre. He had previously worked as Security and Policy Analyst at the National Institute for Legislative

and Democratic Studies (NILDS), National Assembly, Abuja-Nigeria. Dr Maurice Ogbonnaya holds a PhD in Political Science from University of Uyo, Nigeria. Dr. Ogbonnaya is a 2020 Individual Research Fellow (IRF) of the Social Science Research Council's African Peacebuilding Network (APN) and a Laureate of the 7th South-South Institute jointly organised in 2014 by the International Development Economic Associates (IDEAs), Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) in Bangkok, Thailand. His research interests include Security and Strategic Studies, Conflict Management, Policy Analysis, and Legislative Practice. His expansive contributions in these areas have appeared in reputable local and international scholarly outlets. Dr. Ogbonnaya has served as research consultant to Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN); Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), Abuja; the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); Small Arms Survey (SAS), Geneva; the UN Women, House of Representatives Committee on Aviation, National Assembly, Abuja, Nigeria; and Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria, South Africa, among others.

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke is a Chief Research Fellow at the National Defence College (NDC) Nigeria and a Visiting Professor in the Department of International Relations, Coal City University (CCU), Enugu-Nigeria. He is also a Visiting Senior Scholar at the Centre for Intelligence Peace and Security Studies, CCU. Nna-Emeka holds a PhD and MSc in Political Science (International Relations) from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and the University of Lagos respectively as well as a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Government and Public Administration from the Abia State University, Nigeria. He is a Fellow of the National Defence College with Strategic Level certification in Higher Defence and Strategic Studies (HDSS). Formerly he served as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Deputy Dean, College of Social and Management Sciences at the Caleb University Lagos. Subsequently, he served as Head, Department of Area and Regional Studies, National Defence College. Nna-Emeka is on the Expert List of the African Union Counterterrorism Centre (AUCTC), Algiers, Lead Exprt to the African Union Mission Support Team (AU-MST) to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) at N'djamena and also a Regional Expert on Counter Financing

of Terrorism for the Intergovernmental Group against Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (GIABA) Dakar, Senegal. He is a member of the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) and served as the Director of Research for the Nigerian Political Science Association (Northcentral) from 2019 to 2023. He has authored four books namely *Citizen and State: An Introduction to Political Discourses* (2004), *Cameroon-Nigeria Relations: Themes and Perspectives* (2022), *Securing Nigeria's Interest in the Gulf of Guinea: Festschrift in Honour of Rear Admiral Murtala Mormoni Bashir* (2023) in addition to the State and the Management of COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: A Reader (2025).

Munachi Nice Okereke is a National Youth Service Corps (Attache) at the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Nigeria where she is deployed as Research attaché in the Department of Area and Regional Studies. She holds a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and is developing research and career interest in development studies, criminology, and sociology of deviance.

Freedom Chukwudi Onuoha is a Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In addition to a doctorate degree in Political Economy, he holds a certificate in Higher Defence and Strategic Studies, Disaster Management, Protection of Civilians, Defence and Security Management, and United Nations Framework, among others. His current teaching and research interests focus on diverse aspects of security and strategic studies, with emphasis on violent extremism, terrorism, insurgency, maritime security, violent conflict, organised crime, security sector reform, and state fragility. Freedom Onuoha has published extensively in this broad area. With Temitope Oriola and Samuel Oyewole, he co-edited *Boko Haram's Terrorist Campaign in Nigeria Contexts, Dimensions and Emerging Trajectories* (London: Routledge, 2021); with Varin Caroline, *Security in Nigeria: Contemporary Threats and Responses* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); and with Oshita Oshita and Alumona Ikenna, *Internal Security Management in Nigeria: Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Edmond Pamba is a Researcher at the Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies in Nairobi. He holds a Bachelors of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy from Maseno University (Kenya). His areas of

research interest centred on terrorism and counterterrorism, international security and foreign policy.

Mohamed Rahali teaches Political Science at the University of Sidi Bel Abbes (UDL), Algeria since 2013 where he holds the chair of Faculty for Political Science and serve as the academic field supervisor. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Political Sciences from the University of Oran (2) in Algeria. He is a peer reviewer for the Algeria Journal of Political Studies and Algeria Journal for Constitutional Law and Political Institutions. His areas of research interests focus on international relations, state building with special focus on Africa and the Maghreb.

Miriam Shafik holds a Master of Law (LL.M) degree in International Law, Diplomacy and International Relations from the Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi in 2014 and a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) from the University of Alexandria, Egypt. She is a Project Management Expert with remarkable expertise in counterterrorism capacity building and training. For over a decade, she has been involved in designing and implementing capacity building programmes on the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism, combating organised crimes and strengthening criminal justice sector. Ms Shafik worked for the U.S. Department of Justice as Resident Legal Advisor Programme Assistant in the Arabian Peninsula based in the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi. During her seven-year tenure, Ms Shafik was responsible for managing more than 70 capacity building and training projects focused on countering terrorism financing, anti-money laundering, and related organised crime for the criminal justice sector in UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan and Yemen. Ms Shafik worked as Programme Manager at the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) in Malta–managing, designing and implementing several capacity building initiatives focusing on countering terrorism, countering terrorism financing and prevention and countering violent extremism for the criminal justice sector worldwide. Miriam Shafik speaks Arabic (native), English, German, French, and Italian fluently.

Stephen Mwachofi Singo teaches Comparative Politics and International Relations at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Nairobi. He is also consulting Deputy Director at Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC), a Kenyan civil society organisation that researches on the phenomenon of Small Arms and Light

Weapons proliferation. He is also a member of the Editorial Board of the Arms Trade Treaty Monitor (ATT) and an Associate Research Fellow at the Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies, where he is co-chair of the Maritime Working Group. Mr. Singo holds a Master of Arts (M.A) in International Relations from the University of Nairobi and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) in Political Science from the Moi University. He also holds a diploma in Peace and Security from Uppsala University and is currently a PhD student in Public Policy at the University of Nairobi. He has researched and published on the subjects of Small Arms and Light Weapons proliferation, the regional dimensions of conflict and peace-building, terrorism, and governance. He is a trainer and facilitator at the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) based in Nairobi, Kenya. Mr. Singo is reading for his PhD in Public Policy at the University of Nairobi. His research is focused on Security Policy.

Rochelle Yen Ru Teo, holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) Degree in Psychology from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. She was awarded the NTU President Research Scholar (Merit) upon completion of the Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) for her paper on "Who Attacks America? Uncovering the Roots of Anti-American Terrorism". She is also an Associate Fellow of the Global Peace Institute, a non-profit think tank which promotes global peace and resilience through peace education, dialogue, training, creating awareness and research.

Obinna Ukaeje is a Research Fellow with the Department of Defence and Security Studies at the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies (CSRS), National Defence College, Nigeria. He holds a Master of Science degree in International Relations, and Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science, both from the University of Abuja, Nigeria. His area of interest is on defence and security studies especially Nigeria's national security. He has published and actively contributed to discourses on Nigeria's national security. He was a member of the National Quarterly Desk Review Committee for Community Initiative for Promoting Peace (CIPP), organised by Savanna Centre for Diplomacy and Development (SCDDD) in 2019, Member, Savannah Centre's research team on Continuous Engagement for National Unity (CENU), 2020.

Yahya Bouzidi began teaching Political Science at the University of Chlef in June 2014. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in

Political Science from the University of Algiers (3) and serves as author and cooperator at the Al Jazzera Centre for Strategic Studies, Doha in Qatar, International Institute for Iranian Studies, Ryad, Saudi Arabia, and the Misbar Centre for Studies, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. He also performs similar roles for the CITA Centre in Istanbul and the Al Fiker Strategic Centre, Istanbul, Turkey. His areas of research endeavours centres on International Relations, Africa and the Arabian Gulf.

Zaid Sekito is a Lecturer of History, in the Department of History, Archaeology & Heritage Studies, Makerere University. He has served as the Coordinator Graduate Studies, College of Humanities & Social Sciences(CHUSS) for the last 3 years & a Convener, Bi-monthly CHUSS Seminar Series. He is an Alumnus, Gerda-Henkel Stiftung Foundation PhD Fellowship (2017), an alumnus of Next-Gen SSRC Dissertation completion (2020), Member Uganda History Society and an external examiner for Kabale University, & Mountain of the Moon University. He is a former African Research universities Alliance (ARUA) Early Career Research (2022–2023), Archiving Memory & Method (AMM) 2023 grantee, African Peace Network (APN) Fellow (2024). Zaid's areas of specialisation are in the fields of; terrorism, trans-border conflicts, violent extremism, conflictology, violent extremism, Religious fundamentalism, and Human Rights. Other areas of interest are; International Relations, Geo-politics, Slave trade & Slavery. Zaid holds a PhD in History (2021) focusing on the History of Terrorism in Uganda. He also holds a Master of Arts in History with specialisation in Political Economy (2016) and a Bachelor of Art (Education) (2007) (History Major) & (Econ Minor). All his university education was done at the Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.

Abbreviations

AA	Anadolu Agency
ABM	Ansar Beit Al Maqdis
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACLED	Armed Conflicts Location and Event Data
ACME	African Centre for Media Excellence
ACSRT	African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism
ADC	Democratic Alliance for Change
ADF	Allied Democratic Force
ADFL	Alliance des Forces Democratique pour la Liberation du Congo-Zaire
ADFs	Ambazonia Defence Forces
AES	L'Alliance des Etats du Sahel
A*f*DB	African Development Bank
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AIAI	Al Ittihad al-Islamiyya
AL	Arab League
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AML/CFT	Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
ANC	African National Congress
ANDSF	Afghan National Defence and Security Forces
ANIF	National Agency for Financial Investigation
ANR	Agence Nationale de Renseignement
AQ	Al-Qa'ida/Al Qaeda
AQAP	Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula

AQEA	Al-Qaeda in Eastern Africa
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AQN	Al-Qaeda Network
AQW	Al-Qaeda in West Africa
ARF	Ambazonia Restoration Forces
ASL	Ansar al Sharia Libya
ASS	Alliance of Sahel States
ATA	Antiterrorism Assistance
ATMIS	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
ATPU	Anti-Terror Police Unit
AU	African Union
AUCTC	African Union Counterterrorism Centre
AUPSC	African Union's Peace and Security Council
AUSSOM	African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCJI	Bureau Central d'Investigation Judiciaire
BH	Boko Haram
BIR	Battalion d'Intervention Rapide
BRSC	Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council
BSIAT	Brigade Speciale des Investigations Antiterroristes
CANIF	Central Bank's Financial Information Analysis Commission
CAPs	Country Action Plans
CAR	Central African Republic
CCCPA	Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Africa
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission
CENTIF	Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financieres
CES	Economic and Social Council
CFT	Countering the Financing of Terrorism
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIFG	Coalition Counter ISIL Finance Group
CILSS	Comité Inter Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel
CISAC	Centre for International Security and Cooperation
C-JTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CLA	Caprivi Liberation Army
CMJD	Conseil Militaire pour la Justice and Democratie
CNN	Cable News Network
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRA	Commission of Revenue Allocation
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies

CT	Counterterrorism
CTCOIN	Counterterrorism and Counter Insurgency
CTDDH	Chadian Convention for the Defence of Human Rights
CVE	Counter Violent Extremism
DDCRS	Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Repatriation programme
DNDF	Djibouti National Defense Forces
DNFBPs	Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR	Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
DS&T	Directorate of Science and Technology
DSS	Department of State Services (Nigeria)
DW	Deutsche Welle
EAF	Egyptian Armed Forces
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECFR EU	European Council on Foreign Relation – European Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIJ	Egyptian Islamic Jihad
ENDF	Ethiopia National Defense Forces
EO	Executive Order
ESAAMLAG	East and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group
ESF	ECOWAS Standby Force
ESO	External Security Organisation
EU	European Union
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali
EUCOM	European Command
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FAM	Forces Armées du Mali/Malian Armed Forces
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
FBTO	Foreign-Based Terrorist Organisation
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FG-G5S	G5 Sahel Joint Force
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FIDH	International Federation of Human Rights
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
FIU	Financial Intelligence Unit
FL	Fusion Liaison Unit
FLA	Front de Liberation de l'Azawad

FLEC	Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front
FPLC	Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo
FSB	Federal Security Service
FSI	Fragile States Index
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organisation
G7	Group 7
GABAC	Groupe d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique Centrale
GATIA	Le Groupe d'Autodefense Touareg Imghad et Allies
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIABA	Groupe d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique de l'Ouest
GICM	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNA-MOI	Government of National Accord—Ministry of Interior
GNC	General National Congress
GPI	Global Peace Index
GPML	Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism
GSIGN	Groupe de Sécurité et d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
HASM	Haraket Saw'aid Misr
HCUA	Le Haut Counseil Pour l'Unite de l'Azawad
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSM	Harakat Al Shabaab al Mujahidin
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
ICAO	Civil Aviation Organization
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICSR	International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
ICWA	Indian Council of World Affairs
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IEP	Institute of Peace and Economics

IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IGASOM	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Peace Support Mission in Somalia
IJR	The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
IMA	Islamic Movement of Azawad
IMCTC	Islamic Military Counterterrorism Coalition
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
INL	Law Enforcement Affairs
INTERPOL	International Police
IOM	International Organisation of Migrations
IPK	Islamic Party of Kenya
I-RECKE	Interregional Knowledge Exchange in Early Warning and Conflict Prevention
IRIS	Institut de Relations Internationale et Strategique
IRSAD	Ansar ul-Islam lil-Ichadwal Jihad
IS	Islamic State
ISCAP	Islamic State of Central African Province
ISGDPs	Islamic State General Directorate of Provinces
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Syria and Iraq
ISIS-GS	ISIS in the Greater Sahara
ISIS-WA	ISIS-West Africa
ISS	Islamic State in Somalia
ISWAP	Islamic State of West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Ladda'Awati Wal-Jihad
JF	Joint Force
JI	Jema'ah al Islamiyah /al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen
KDF	Kenya Defense Forces
KST	Kivu Security Tracker
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LIFG	Libya Islamic Fighting Group
LNA	Libyan National Army
LPA	Libya Political Agreement
LUCHA	Lutte pour le Changement
MAA	Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad
MAGO	Muslims Against Global Oppression
MDSs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENAFATF	Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MER	Mutual Evaluation Report

MIATE	Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education
MIDAS	Migration Information Data Analysis System
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MJSOR	Misrata Joint Security Operations Room
ML/TF	Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing
MLC	Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo
MLF	Macina Liberation Front
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MNS	Ministry of National Security (Ghana)
MOJWA	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
MPLA	Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MSR	Main Supply Routes
MUJAO	Movement for Tawhid (Unity) and Jihad in West Africa
MYC	Muslim Youth Centre
NAF	Nigerien Armed Forces
NAI	Nordiska Africain Institutet
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCTC	National Counter Terrorism Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHDI	National Human Development Initiative
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NRA	National Risk Assessment
NSAGs	Non-State Armed Groups
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPSC	Operation Safe Corridor
ORBAT	Order of Battle
P3S	Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel
PAGAD	People Against Gangsterism and Drugs
PBIEDs	Person-Born Improvised Explosive Devices
PERLT	Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism Leading to Terrorism
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PISCES	Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PMC	Private Military Contractors
PMPF	Puntland Maritime Police Force

POCDATARA	Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorist and Related Activities
PSA	Parti Solidarite Africaine
PSF	Puntland Security Forces
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
PUDEMO	People's United Democratic Movement
PUS	Plan d'Urgence pour le Sahel
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RFI	Rift Valley Institute
RIFU	Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RPGs	Rocket Propelled Grenades
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADR	Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic
SALWs	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAPS	South African Police Service
SBB	Signers in Blood Battalion
SCCRC	Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SDGT	Specially Designated Global Terrorists
SGPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLOC	Sea Line of Communication
SNA	Somali National Army
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPU	Special Protection Unit
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
SSS	Sahel-Saharan Strip
SVBIED	Suicide Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
SVEST	Suicide Vest
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples' organization
SWAYOCO	Swaziland Youth Congress
TAR	Traditional African Religion
TCC	Troop Contributing Country
TCRST	Tunisian Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TSCTI	Trans- Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
TTF	Takuba Task Force
TTP	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures

TWJWA	al-Tawih Wal-Jihad in West Africa
UAE	United Arab Emirate
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire l'Ouest Africaine
UK	United Kingdom
UN-CTED	United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNITA	Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola
UNOC	United Nations Operation in the Congo
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office in Central Africa
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination Humanitarian Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the ae
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
US/USA	United States of America
UTA	Union de Transport Aeriens
VBIED	Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device
VDP	Defence of the Fatherland
WACL	West African Ceramics Limited
WAEMU	West African Monetary Union
WAM	Weapons and Ammunitions Management
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding
WB	World Bank
WTC	World Trade Centre

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Periscoping Terrorism in Africa

Rohan Gunaratna and C. Nna-Emeka Okereke

Introduction

In 2024 alone, the African Union Counter-Terrorism Centre (AUCTC) recorded over 3,400 terrorist attacks on the continent. These attacks resulted in over 13,900 fatalities. Indeed, this is a damning challenge facing Africa. We have reached a tipping point and we must act together in response.
—Adeoye Bankole[1]

[1] Bankole Adeoye. (2025). "African-led and Development-focused Counterterrorism: Strengthening African Leadership and Implementation of Counterterrorism Initiatives" Remarks by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner Political Affairs, Peace and Security at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate, New York, USA 21 January. Also see, YouTube platform, youtu.be/3o-11OLIDhI.

R. Gunaratna
International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: isrkgunaratna@ntu.edu.sg

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The advent of the twenty-first century came with a redefinition of Africa's security landscape and placed terrorism at the centre stage of security threats and discourses in Africa. The landmark shift followed the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York while the Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) consolidated the trend. Halfway into the third decade of the century, Africa increasingly emerged as the new epicentre of global terrorism. By this, the centre of gravity of terrorism has moved away from other parts of the globe to concentrate in Africa. Several factors account for this trend and these include internal vulnerabilities as well as external dynamics. Intriguingly, Africa's profile as the new epicentre of global terrorism presents a paradox when considered alongside the several political statements and counterterrorism conventions and strategies adopted at continental, regional and national levels in Africa since 1999.

The nature and trends of terrorist acts in Africa are characterised by the escalation of terrorist bombings, kidnapping for ransom and hostage taking, attacks on critical infrastructure and tourists, piracy, hijacking of aircrafts, diplomatic assets and historical assets as well as the financing of terrorism through illicit domestic and transnational organised criminal activity. Between the 1990s and the advent of the Islamic State, the scourge of terrorism was focused on four main theatres in Africa notably, the East and the Horn of Africa with Somalia as epicentre, Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel as well as the North Africa and the Maghreb. Northern Mozambique became the fifth theatre towards the end of 2017 when militant Islamists launched terrorist onslaughts against the territory. By this, terrorist groups in Africa have demonstrated that they can reach any part of the continent despite extant counterterrorism laws and strategies adopted at various national and regional levels. To this effect, the continued spread of terrorism in Africa therefore raises questions about the efficacy of counterterrorism frameworks, partnerships and strategies adopted to combat the challenge.

Beginning from the late 1990s, some major attacks were the Luxor 1997 bombings in Egypt by the Al-Jama'ah al Islamiyah. The Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) including the Salafist Group for Preaching and

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@gmail.com

Combat (GSPC) were among the major violent extremist groups that threatened Algeria and her North African neighbours with terror attacks in the 1990s.[2] Also, the terrorist attacks on the embassies of the United States in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) on 7 August 1998 leading to the deaths of 224 persons including 12 Americans while about 4,500 others were wounded also constitute other major incidents of terrorist acts in Africa prior to the twenty-first century.[3] Subsequently, the Al Shabaab al Mujahedin and the Lord Resistant Army (LRA) became the most prominent terrorist organizations in East Africa, Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. While the LRA began as an insurgent group in Uganda before becoming a transnational terrorist group in the region, the Al Shabaab emerged in 2006 as the youth wing of the Union of Islamic Conference in Somalia but later began perpetrating terrorist acts within and beyond Somalia targeting neighbouring Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya.

With the growing penetration of the Al Qaeda Network in Africa, more terrorist attacks were unleashed on the continent targeting both Africans and non-Africans. These created far-reaching implications for security and stability of African states. For instance, elements of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) unleashed terrorist attack at national office of the United Nations at Algiers in December 2007. This attack was considered a bold declaration by the group, as part of its transformation from the GSPC to the Al Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[4] In Nigeria, the Boko Haram which became very prominent in July 2009 carried out terror attacks on the headquarters of the Nigerian Police Force, otherwise called the Louis Edet House, as well as the United Nations Building, both located within Abuja capital city, in June and August 2011 respectively. Like the AQIM, the Boko Haram attack on the United Nations House in Abuja is also considered a bold declaration of the group's allegiance to the Al Qaeda Network. The choice of the month of August for the attack is remarkable considering that the world summit of the United Nations holds annually every September making the attack a strategic communication to the global policy audience. Consequently,

[2] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Interrogating the Scourge of Terrorism in North Africa, *African Political Science Review*, Volume 2, Number 1, 2010, pp. 96–110.

[3] Today in history, "US Embassies in East Africa Bombed" accessed 7 May 2020 https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/u-s-embassies-in-east-africa-bombed.

[4] Okereke, 2010, *Op. Cit.*

the Lake Chad basin where the Boko Haram operated emerged the focal point of terrorist aggression in Africa since the second decade of the twenty-first century. By 2014, the incidence of terrorism-related fatalities recorded in the Lake Chad basin was put at 13,670 while the North Africa which previously took tops on Africa's mirror of terrorism had 3,650 fatalities.[5]

The incidence of terrorism in Africa further escalated with emergence of the Islamic State on the global stage in 2014. The escalation was facilitated by the transnational exchanges in the form of new alliances and movement of foreign terrorist fighters between the MENA and sub-Saharan Africa. By March 2015, the Boko Haram terrorists under Abubakar Shekau's leadership, shifted allegiance from the Al Qaeda Network to the Islamic State upon which it assumed a new identity as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). The Sahel has however overtaken both the Lake Chad basin and North Africa following the escalation of terrorist acts and fatalities beyond the scope in the Lake Chad basin and North Africa. This has been attributed to the activities of Al Qaeda and Islamic State in the region.

The Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) became very active in parts of the Sahel where it fused with affiliated extremist groups into a confederation of active combat units referred to as the *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin* (JNIM) or Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims. Since its formation, the JNIM has been unleashing audacious attacks on Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger with some spill-over attacks on Benin, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.[6] Like the JNIM, some Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs) in the Sahel such as the Al Mourabitoum, formed new alliances resulting in the emergence of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the transnationalisation of terrorism in the region and beyond. The transnational threats posed by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State and Al Qaeda in Africa are

[5] African Centre for Strategic Studies, "Africa's Constantly Evolving Militant Islamic Threats" 13 August 2024; https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/MIG2024EN-Africas-Constantly-Evolving-Militant-Islamist-Threat.pdf (accessed 13 October 2024).

[6] Sergei Boeke, "Pathways out of the quagmire? Perspectives for Al-Qaeda in the Sahel" International Centre for Counterterrorism, The Hague, 24 August 2021, https://icct.nl/publication/perspectives-for-al-qaeda-in-the-sahel/?utm_campaign=Counter-Terrorism%20News%20Round-Up&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newsletter (accessed 3 September 2021).

deepened by the fact that both organisations and their cells readily adapt to new and evolving technologies.

Available statistics indicates that between 2021 and 2024, the incidence of deaths attributed to terrorism in the Sahel steadily increased to an estimated 11,200 deaths in 2024, which represents a tripling of casualties since 2021.[7] Statistics from the Global Terrorism Index 2023 indicates that although the incidence of terrorism declined from 5,463 in 2021 to 3,955 in 2022, terrorist attacks in 2022 became more deadly killing an average of 1.7 per attack as against 1.3 per attack in 2021.[8] Furthermore, the number of deaths in 2022 was 6,701.of which 60% or 4,023 deaths occurred in sub-Saharan Africa of which 43% occurred in its Sahel region with Burkina Faso and Mali constituting 73% of total deaths in the Sahel region and 52% of deaths in sub-Saharan Africa.[9]

Reflecting on the threats, Mr. Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, therefore cautions that "if nothing is done, the effects of terrorism, violent extremism and organised crimes will be felt far beyond the region and the African continent".[10] This prognosis has found its validation in resurgence of military coups in West Africa and the Sahel where the armed forces of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger leveraged on concerns of insecurity to overthrow elected civilian administrations in the respective countries. The new military regimes further took drastic diplomatic measures against the ECOWAS, France and the United States over their stand on unconstitutional change of government. These measures include the formation of Alliance of Sahel State, the accompanying withdrawal of membership from the ECOWAS and subsequent transformation of the Alliance into a Confederation of Sahel States. In addition, the diplomatic row arising from the nexus between terrorism and unconstitutional change of government in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger further resulted in their severance of diplomatic relations with France and withdrawal of French troops from their territories, including the closure of

[7] Ibid.

[8] Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2023" cited in United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Reliefweb* https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2023 (accessed 20 April 2023).

[9] Ibid.

[10] Antonio Guterres, cited in United Nations Development Programme, "Journey of Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement" United Nations Development Programme, 2023.

United States military bases in Niger in preference for Russian combat supports against terrorism in their countries. The raging diplomatic rows were deepened by direct allegations by the Sahel that France was working through certain neighbouring countries to sustain insecurities in the Sahel to destabilise the military regimes.[11] Niger's military Head of State, General Abdourahmane Tchiani specifically accused Nigeria of colluding with France to undermine the security of Niger, an allegation Nigeria and the ECOWAS has refuted.[12]

Explaining the Spread of Terrorism in Africa

Africa's rising terrorism profile did not suddenly arise. Rather, it is a culmination of interacting forces within and beyond the continent which revolves on the diffusion of values that have accompanied globalisation, dynamics of governance, transnationalisation and the continuing weaponisation of religion and ideologies across polities. Some attempts at explaining how Africa degenerated to be the hotbed of terrorism locate the root of the problem in the interplay of endogenous and exogenous variables. Curious analysts pose and interrogate the following questions:

a. What are the interplay of forces that interact to sustain the spread of terrorism in Africa?
b. Why has the scourge of terrorism continued to spread across the continent despite the introduction and implementation of various conventions, legislations and strategies to exorcise the spectre?
c. What can be done for terrorism to contain and diminish terrorism in Africa?

Explanations on the spread of terrorism in Africa are endless and some have sought to locate it on the unintended consequences of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) led by the United States in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Others draw attention to the growing utility of online radicalisation through the use of social media

[11] Confederation of Sahel States, "Statement by the College of Heads of States of the Confederation of Sahel State", Bamako, 22 December 2024.

[12] Yusuf Akinpelu, "Nigeria Denies Colluding with France to Destabilise Niger" *BBC News*, 27 December 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpq9x94gj2no (accessed 7 January 2025).

platforms to spread extremist narratives that leads to terrorism, profound resilience of terrorism groups and the interplay of socio-political and economic factors prevalent across Africa. Terrorist groups across Africa especially the Al Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates continuously leverage on the various social media platforms to recruit and radicalise vulnerable population. This is facilitated by the existence of mass populations of impoverished, disillusioned and disgruntled populace seeking new meaning and solutions to their existential challenges to which terrorist distorted interpretations of reality offer new hopes.

A historical reflection of the evolution of terrorism in Africa from the last decade of the twentieth century is also important to understand Africa's conundrum. The end of the Soviet-Afghanistan conflict and accompanying return of several North Africans who fought for the Mujahidin resistance against the Soviets in Afghanistan also added fervour to the internal turmoil that stimulated and sustained terrorism in North Africa. The case of Algeria where the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) mobilised popular support in the quest to political leadership through democratic processes remains instructive especially with the group's resort to terror following military intervention to halt an election, it was poised to win in 1991.

Beyond the return of Mujahidin in North Africa, the post-11 September 2001 terror attack in New York, especially the declaration of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) by the George Bush administration in the United States had implications for the evolution of terrorism in Africa. Of note is that the global counterterrorism offensives against Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda Network (AQN) constrained the activities of terrorists in America, Europe and Middle East thereby leading to the search for new territories to operate. One consequence was the relocation of operations to Africa especially south of the Sahara where the existence of under-governed spaces enabled the established sanctuaries that facilitate terrorist recruitment, radicalisation, training, financing and mobilisation of logistics. The existence of fragile states in sub-Saharan Africa, especially the Sahel and Horn of Africa, proved useful for their activities and subsequently became more vulnerable to activities of the Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. Fragile state syndrome characterised by weak institutions contributed to menace of under-governed and under-patrolled spaces which several domestic and global terrorist networks leverage upon to sustain the crumbling enterprises elsewhere.

The outbreak of the Arab Spring especially the violent overthrow of the Ghadaffi regime in Libya further facilitated the spread of terrorism in Africa as terrorist organisations and other armed groups exploited opportunities that accompanied the violent collapse of the Ghadaffi regime in Libya. In addition, several battle tested fighters of West African origin especially Tuareg fighters in Mali and Niger fled back to their respective countries with huge quantities of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) looted from the Libyan armoury and these increased access to SALWs by several non-state groups especially Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs) operating in West Africa and the Sahel.[13]

In the Lake Chad Basin, the Nigeria-based Boko Haram acquired new resources and logistics in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and these emboldened the group to launch cross-border attacks beyond Nigeria targeting neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.[14] By March 2015, the Boko Haram leadership under Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and transformed to the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). It was the ISWAP that attacked the Kaduna-Abuja train services of the Nigeria Railway Corporation on 28 March 2022 leading to deaths and hostage incidents culminating to huge payment of ransoms.[15] The group further attacked the Medium Security Custodial Centre in Kuje Area Council of Abuja as a follow-on to the train attack. This prison attack resulted to the escape of over 800 prisoners including 64 Boko Haram terrorists whom the ISWAP had earlier demanded their release from in custody of the Nigerian authorities.[16]

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 also created another enabling environment for the spread of terrorism in Africa. Terrorist groups worldwide and their affiliates exploited the disruptions, grievances and development setbacks caused by the pandemic to regroup, recruit

[13] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Countering violent extremism and insurgency in the wake of Arab Spring" Peace support operations in Mali in perspective" *African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism*, Vol. 7, No. 1, June 2018, pp. 68–102.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibrahim Hassan-Wuyo, "They slaughtered six cows to feed us, train attack victim, abducted with wife, speaks of life with terrorists" *The Vanguard*, 16 July 2022.

[16] Luminous Jannamike, "Revealed: Kuje prison attackers were led by ex-terrorist inmates who knew every location" *Vanguard*, 9 July 2022.

new followers and intensify their activities.[17] The effect was that transnational terrorism in Africa escalated as cells of the Islamic State intensified their attacks across Africa thereby deepening insecurities across the continent.

While terrorist groups continue to ravage the continent, it is worthwhile to note that Africa has reached a turning point in the fight against being the epicentre of global terrorism to becoming the leading continent for effective development-focused counterterrorism.[18] This drive is sustained by various national, regional and continental counterterrorism programmes initiated and implemented across the continent. In 1999, the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted the Convention of the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa at Algiers while the African Union adopted the Plan of Action of the African Union (AU) High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa on 14 September 2002.[19] These instruments set the stage for further counterterrorism cooperative engagements as the AU continues to mobilise member states for effective counterterrorism engagements across the continent. Prime among these are African Union Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad, the African Union's Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery, and Resilience of the Lake Chad Basin which remains a prime example of linking security with development as well as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) which has been replaced by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). It is instructive to note that the UN Security Council Resolution 2767 (2024) endorsed the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council to replace the ATMIS with the African Union

[17] United Nations News, "Islamic State threat moves online, expands across Africa: Senior counter-terrorism expert" accessed 19 September 2021, https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1098112 (accessed 24 January 2024).

[18] Adeoye, B. (2025). United Nations Security Council Open Debate Remarks by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner Political Affairs, Peace and Security On "African-led and Development-focused Counterterrorism: Strengthening African Leadership and Implementation of Counterterrorism Initiatives" New York, USA 21 January. Also see, YouTube platform, youtu.be/3o-11OLIDhI.

[19] African Union, "Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa" accessed 7 May 2020, https://au.int/en/treaties/oau-convention-prevention-and-combating-terrorism; Also see the Plan of Action of the African Union High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa 11–14 September 2002.

Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) with effect from 1 January 2025.[20] Other key counterterrorism cooperation arrangements include the Liptako-Gourma Charter which heralded the Confederation of Sahel States and the Southern Africa Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). These initiatives signify the growing commitment of African countries towards effective development-focused responses to exorcise the ravaging spectre of terrorism threatening the peace and security in the continent.

It is however instructive to observe that despite the litany of counterterrorism measures, terrorist groups in Africa have continued to reinvent their operations while also demonstrating tremendous resilience that calls to question the efficacy of counterterrorism engagements in Africa. The foregoing observable trends and dynamics therefore demands closer studies of the phenomenon of terrorism at the various national and regional levels in Africa. This concern formed the crux of this book as different experts analysed the regional and national dynamics of African countries threatened by terrorism.

Synopsis of the Book

The *Palgrave Handbook on Terrorism in Africa* is a compendium of essays by experienced African scholars and experts with informed knowledge on terrorism and insurgencies in Africa. The book examines the evolution, dynamics and drivers of terrorism in Africa focusing on regional and country-specific analysis of terrorism while also exploring the emerging trends in the continent. The unfolding analysis indicates that the incident of terrorism in Africa has steadily been on the increase since 2001 and various African countries are increasingly affected by the direct and spillover effects of terrorism from neighbours as terrorist groups exploit the

[20] African Union, (2024). Communique Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1253rd meeting held on 19 December 2024 on Briefing on the Situation in Somalia, and Post-ATMIS Security Arrangements, PSC/MIN/COMM.1253 (2024), https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1253rd-meeting-of-the-psc-on-the-situation-in-somalia-and-post-atmis-security-arrangements (accessed 25 January 2025). Also See, United Nations Security Council, (2024). "Adopting Resolution 2767 (2024), Security Council Endorses New African Union Support Mission in Somalia, S/RES/2767(2024), 27 December, https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15955.doc.htm (accessed 25 January 2025).

existing porous borders to their advantage. The synopsis of the regional and country-specific analysis of the chapters is shown below.

Rohan Gunaratna and C. Nna-Emeka Okereke began Chapter 1 with a robust introduction which provides a tacit historical overview of the trends and dynamics of terrorism in Africa. In addition, they identified the major interplay of forces driving terrorism on the continent as well as the regional manifestation of the trends. Both authors further identified the nexus between global terrorist networks and the major terrorist organisations threatening African countries while also reflecting on the key counterterrorism engagements at national, regional and continental levels in Africa. They concluded the introduction with a synopsis of all the chapters in the book.

In Chapter 2, Walter Nkwi discusses terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Central Africa and notes that in the last three decades, terrorism in the region has proved dynamic with terrorist groups forging close alliances with global terrorist networks and leveraging on the use of phones and social media such as the internet, WhatsApp or YouTube platforms to mobilise support and connect one another and spread their narratives and propaganda.

Henry Kam Kah analysed how terrorism has ravaged Cameroon in Chapter 3. He identified the Boko Haram and the Ambazonia armed groups as major actors accused by the Government of Cameroon of perpetrating acts of terrorism in the country. He notes that the Government of Cameroon enacted anti-terrorism legislation in 2014 among other measures at national and international levels in response to the growing kinetic and potential threats of terrorism in the country.

Chad's experience of terrorism was examined by Obinna Ukaeje in Chapter 4. He established nexus between the trends and dynamics of terrorism in Chad with the prevailing threats in the Lake Chad basin area, larger Sahel belt and neighbouring North Africa and the Maghreb. One core point identified is that the violent collapse of the Ghadaffi regime in Libya exerted immense pressures on Chad and its neighbours which terrorist and other armed groups in the Sahel exploited to sustain acts of terrorism within and beyond Chad.

In Chapter 5, Greg Fah Fombo and C. Nna-Emeka Okereke focused on the nature and dynamics of terrorism in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He identified notes that the history of political turmoil and intractable conflicts as integral to the scourge of terrorism in the country as these contribute to the inability of the central government to effectively

exert power within its jurisdiction which has for over five decades since independence been contested by various non-state armed group.

The evolution and dynamics of terrorism in East and Horn of Africa were examined by Richard Barno and James Kamotho in Chapter 6. It is the view that the countries of East Africa are both sources of terrorism and victims too and identifies the Al Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabaab, the Islamic State's regional affiliates, including the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) as the key platforms for perpetrating terrorism in the region.

Hassan Abdullahi Guhad examines the Djibouti experience of terrorism in Chapter 7. He notes that terrorist threats in Djibouti do not originate from within its borders but from its neighbouring states in the Horn of Africa especially Somalia which has been the epicentre of terrorism and piracy in the region. Djibouti's therefore occupies a critical position in the Horn of Africa that is of immense interest to extra-continental powers combating piracy and terrorism in the region.

In Chapter 8, Singo and Pamba analysed the Kenyan experience of terrorism and posited that *t*errorism in Kenya is sustained by the structural vulnerabilities at domestic level interacting with external threats from its neighbours in East Africa. They identified the harbinger of terrorism in Kenya as cells of the Al Qaeda and the Islamic State with the Somali-based Al Shabaab al Mujahideen as the most prominent threat.

Like in Chapter 9, Singo and Pamba examine terrorism in Somalia and also locate the Al Shabaab as the single most driving force of terrorism in the country. They further observed the dynamics of cross-border acts of terrorism orchestrated and perpetrated by the Al Shabaab beyond Somalia into neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda thereby provoking international coalition against the group. Yet, despite the concert of actions against the group as coordinated by the African Union, acts of terrorism by the Al Shabaab still persist and continue to pose threats to regional peace and security in East and Horn of Africa.

In Chapter 10, C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Felix Ikalewumi focused on terrorism in Somaliland and Puntland which were part of Somalia before the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 and now claiming forms of autonomy from Mogadishu regime. It noted that whereas Somaliland has been able to contain the Al Shabaab activities through whole-of-government and whole-of-society engagement, Puntland has failed to contain Al Shabaab terrorism.

In Chapter 11, Charlotte Mafumbo, C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Zaid Sekito focused on terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Uganda and identified the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) as the main perpetrator of terrorist acts in Uganda. This however did not exonerate the Al Shabaab of its complicity in the July 2010 terror attack in Kampala during the finals of the World Cup football tournament. In addition, they observed that although the Al Shabaab and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) operate from camps in neighbouring countries, both groups have sleeper and active cells within the country with which they plan and execute terrorist assaults on Uganda intermittently. The activities of these organisations have therefore kept the Government of Uganda continuously alert to ensure the security of lives and property in the country.

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Ibifubara Abbiyesuku focused on the nature and dynamics of terrorism in Northern Africa and the Maghreb in Chapter 12. They observed that North Africa and the Maghreb emerged hotbed of terrorism in Africa in the last decade of the twentieth century and this was linked to the internal socio-political dynamics of the countries and external happenings affecting the Muslim populations in Asia and the Middle East. While the scourge of terrorism in the region came under immense control in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the outbreak of the Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) stimulated new geo-strategic and security dynamics that deepened the challenge of terrorism in Africa. It is their position that the violent overthrow of the Ghaddafi regime in Libya and military overthrow of the Mohammed Morsi administration in Egypt reignited the internal dynamics in both countries which keep interacting with trends in the Middle East to sustain terrorist threats in North Africa and beyond.

In Chapter 13, Mohamed Rahali and Yahya Bouzidi examine Algeria's experience of terrorism with emphasis on the trends and dynamics. They identified the various stages in the evolution and the major groups that have emerged and blossomed and declined as well as the major actors. Counterterrorism efforts of the Government of Algeria were also enumerated from which other countries could draw useful lessons.

Miriam Shafik examines Egypt's experience of terrorism in Chapter 14. The origin and evolution of terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in the country were clearly explained. Miriam also enumerated on the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood and other groups that have existed in Egypt including their interface with regional and global terrorist groups. Finally,

she also drew attentions to the measures adopted by the Government of Egypt to counter the terrorist challenge in the country.

In Chapter 15, C. Nna-Emeka Okereke examines the dynamics of terrorism in Libya. He notes that while Libya was categorised as state sponsor of terrorism in more than three decades of the Ghaddafi regime, the country eventually pledged commitments to international conventions against terrorism prior to the Arab Spring. However, the violent overthrow of the Ghaddafi dictatorship and accompanying absence of strong central authority in Tripoli, created enabling environment for terrorist groups to flourish in Libya in a manner that puts the country at the crossroad requiring sustained international actions to contain.

Mauritania's experience of terrorism formed the crux of Chapter 16 as Fombo and Okereke examined the geo-strategic implications of terrorism in the Sahel neighbourhood to security and stability of Mauritania. Subsequently, he examines official counterterrorism efforts of the Mauritania government from where he noted that the scourge of terrorism in the country has been significantly contained as a result of effective state interventions in counterterrorism engagements.

In Chapter 17, Gunaratna and Teo addressed the incidence of terrorism in Morocco and traced it to Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia and Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) from Egypt. They linked the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in Morocco to the activities of Moroccans that returned from Afghanistan after Soviet conflict with the Mujahadeen fighters in the 1980s. As part of its counterterrorism engagements, the Government of Morocco proscribed groups such as the Al-Shabiba Brotherhood and the al-Adl wal-Ihsan among others.

The dynamics of terrorism and counterterrorism in Tunisia formed the crus of analysis in Chapter 18. Miriam Shafik demonstrated how domestic political repression forced extremists to go into exile from where they forged stronger alliance with which they returned to mount pressures on the Government of Tunisia sometime through acts of terrorism. In addition, Shafik clearly demonstrated that terrorists and violent extremist individuals and organisations in Tunisia were so deeply rooted that they sometimes utilised the prison facilities for radicalisation.

Anneli Botha examines the trends and dynamics of terrorism in Southern Africa in Chapter 19 and notes that for several decades, the Southern Africa region was considered as largely immune from threat of terrorism and violent extremism when compared to other regions on the continent. However, the penetration and perpetration of terrorist

acts in Mozambique have shattered the myth of immunity previously ascribed on Southern Africa where socioeconomic challenges, high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate and the effects of climate change previously posed more threatening concerns. The evolving threats have elicited regional counterterrorism engagements by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

In Chapter 20, Hassan Abdullahi Guhad focused on terrorism in Mozambique and traced the flight of Al Shabaab elements from Tanzania to Capo Delgado. It is this group that formed the nucleus of Islamic State in Mozambique. Hassan noted that the Islamic State's presence in Mozambique constitutes threats to the entire Southern Africa which has significantly remained immune from terrorist assaults. He therefore proffered more international engagement as crucial in countering ISIS assaults in Mozambique in particular and Southern Africa in general.

West Africa's experience of terrorism formed the crux of analysis in Chapter 21. Here, Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya traced the origin and evolution of terrorism in West Africa and linked it to the evolving security threats in West Africa and the Sahel. His central argument and thesis is that terrorism in the Sahel is a function of several factors; environmental, historical and political factors and further rooted in intervening endogenous and exogenous variables from within and beyond the region. Ogbonnaya further observed that West Africa has proved a catchment area for various terrorist groups linked to the Al Qaeda and Islamic State.

In Chapter 22, Nna-Emeka Okereke and Munachi Okereke examined the Burkina Faso experience of terrorism which accompanied the forced exit of former President Blaise Campaore from office in 2015. The analysis highlights the nature and trends of the terrorism in Burkina Faso and how the terrorist acts by the ISGS and the JNIM interacted to project Burkina Faso as the terrorism most impacted country in global baseline index for 2023 and 2024. The chapter also noted that the incidence of terrorism in the country also leverages on hostile inter-group relations within the population.

Fiifi Edu-Afful and Fafali Alai focuses on Cote d'Ivoire's experience with terrorism in Chapter 23. Beyond examining the country's political history especially, the civil war that accompanied the death of former President Felix Houphoeut Boigny, Fiifi and Fafali noted that Cote d'Ivoire's proximity to terrorism ravaged Burkina Faso and Mali, exposes it to terrorist infiltration especially at the frontier areas and beyond. It is however to the credit of the country's official counterterrorism measures

that terrorist attacks have long been contained since the aftermath of the Grand Bassam attack in March 2016.

C. Nna-Okereke Okereke examines the terrorist challenge in Mali in Chapter 24 and notes that in addition to Tuareg irredentism and insurgencies in pursuit of an independent State of Azawad, Mali has become an epicentre of terrorism in the Sahel. This was largely caused by the Arab Spring in Libya especially the violent overthrow of the Ghadaffi regime which created space for the return of Tuareg fighters previously serving under Ghadaffi's Africa Legion as well as the accompanying looting of Libya's armoury by several illicit arms traffickers and non-state armed groups in the Sahel-Saharan belt. Elements of the global terrorist networks aligned to the Al Qaeda and Islamic State have therefore exploited the situation in Mali to sustain their operations.

In Chapter 25, Danladi Bot examines Niger's experience of terrorism. He noted that Niger is one of the countries in the Lake Chad Basin threatened by various terrorist groups in West Africa and the Sahel such as the Boko Haram, ISGS, JNIM and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). The chapter also accounts for domestic and international measures undertaken by the Government of Niger to counter the terrorist challenge in the country.

Freedom Onuoha focused on Nigeria's experience of terrorism in Chapter 26, noting that acts of terrorism perpetrated by the Ansaru, Boko Haram, ISWAP and its splinter groups, undoubtedly top the list of Nigeria's security threat profile. He noted that the Government of Nigeria has employed various measures to combat the threat but the activities of these terrorist groups continue to drain the country financially, materially and militarily. It is his view that the Boko Haram insurgency clearly reveals several changes and continuity in the spectrum of extremist violence. In addition, he posits that the splintering of the group has occasioned noticeable changes in the terrorism landscape and this demonstrates continuity in the spectrum of extremist violence in Africa's most populous country.

Finally, C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Rohan Gunaratna provide cogent reflections and informed prognosis on the trends of terrorism in Africa in Chapter 27. They observed among other things that the incidence of terrorism in Africa is defined by the interplay of internal socio-political and economic trends within the continent and external happenings outside Africa which have spill-over effects on the continent. From this, they speculate that with the sustained fragility of states, prevalence of under-governed spaces as well as growing grievances of sections of the

population against their respective government, the scourge of terrorism will persist into the next decade despite the grandiose aspirations encapsulated by various national and regional counterterrorism instruments in Africa, including the aspirations of Silencing the Guns pursued by the African Union. Drawing from these, Rohan and Nna-Emeka call for political will among African leaders and sustained international cooperation to exorcise terrorism from Africa.

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PART I

Central Africa

Check for updates

CHAPTER 2

Anatomy of Terrorist Threats and Vulnerabilities in Central Africa

Walter Gam Nkwi

Introduction

Terrorism is considered as the calculated use of violence in order to create a general climate of fear in the population and government and thereby achieve a particular political objective.[1] In concrete terms, its definition has been wrapped in obscurity and debate further making it cumbersome for a universal definition. Consequently, ferocity and violence, which are key characteristics of terrorism, the term in its everyday parlance appear to have developed an intense stigma.[2] Terrorism has been practiced by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives and also by nationalistic and religious groups, revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police with the excuse

[1] https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+terrorism&rlz=1C1GCEA_enNL972NL972&oq=What+is+terrorism&aqs. Accessed 12 December 2021.

[2] https://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism. Accessed 10 December 2021.

W. G. Nkwi (✉)
Institute of History, University of Leiden, Leiden, The Netherlands
e-mail: w.nkwi.gam@hum.leidenuniv.nl; NkwiW@ukzn.ac.za

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-89940-9_2

to silence dissenting voices.[3] The historicity of terrorism took its datum point in the late eighteenth century. Therefore, historically, it could be better appreciated if we place it within the repertoire of *longue durée*. *Ipso facto*, it was first coined in the 1790s during the second phase of the French Revolution. This was used to refer to the reign of terror by the revolutionaries against their opponents. The Jacobin Party, formed by its notorious leader, Maximilien Robespierre carried out a Reign of Terror.[4] Chief among its characteristics was involving the mass executions by the newly invented machine, guillotine which was used to kill people very quickly by cutting their throats.[5] Although terrorism in this usage implies an act of violence by a state against its domestic enemies (who are branded as terrorists), since the twentieth century the term has been slipped most frequently to violence aimed, either directly or indirectly, at governments in an effort to influence policy or topple an existing regime.

The *modus operandi* of terrorist groups is almost the same, the world over and in some circumstances and operations they did overlap. First and foremost, in an attempt for the terrorist to attract and maintain their publicity which they think is necessary to generate widespread fear, terrorists have, in most of their activities, engaged in increasingly dramatic, violent, and high-profile attacks. These include among others hijackings, hostage takings, kidnappings, mass shootings, car bombings, and, frequently, suicide bombings.[6] A cursory observation at the manner in which terrorists carry out these attacks in places suggests that they are often carefully selected for their shock value. For instance, schools, shopping centers, bus and train stations, and restaurants as well as nightclubs have been targeted.[7] These are both because they attract large crowds and because they are places with which members of the civilian population are familiar and in which they feel at ease. The goal and/or objectives of terrorism generally are to destroy the public's sense of security in the

[3] Ibid.

[4] Maximilienne Robespierre. https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/robespierre_maximilien.shtml. Accessed 10 December 11, 2021.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Terrorist Activity. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/terrorist-activity. Accessed 11 December 2021.

[7] S Chung, M Shannon, Hospital planning for acts of terrorism and other public health emergencies involving children. Retrieved from https://adc.bmj.com/content/archdischild/90/12/1300.full.pdf. Accessed 11 December 2021.

places most familiar to them. They have major targets which sometimes also include buildings or other locations that are important economic or political symbols, such as embassies or military installations.[8] The hope of the terrorist is that the more sense of terror these acts engender, it will impel the population to pressure political leaders toward a specific political end.[9] Whether terrorism attains such objectives is a matter of conjecture.

The typologies of terrorism are worth looking at. Essentially, there are three types of terrorism, although various attempts have been made to distinguish among types of terrorist activities. It is also vital to bear in mind, however, that there are many kinds of terrorist movements, and no single theory appears to cover the ground that involves all of them.[10] In this paper, I will limit to three types which are relevant to the paper. Not only are the aims, members, beliefs, and resources of groups engaged in terrorism extremely diverse, but so are the political contexts of their campaigns.

These are: revolutionary, sub-revolutionary, and establishment. Revolutionary terrorism is arguably the most common form. Practitioners of this type of terrorism seek the complete abolition of a political system and its replacement with new structures. Sub-revolutionary terrorism is rather less common. It is used not to overthrow an existing regime but to modify the existing socio-political structure. Since this modification is often accomplished through the threat of deposing the existing regime, sub-revolutionary groups are somewhat more difficult to identify. Establishment terrorism, often called state or state-sponsored terrorism, is employed by governments—or more often by factions within governments—against that government's citizens, against factions within the government, or against foreign governments or groups.[11] This type of terrorism is very common but difficult to identify, mainly because the state's support is always covert.

[8] William L. Waugh Jr. The Values In Violence: Organizational And Political Objectives of Terrorist Groups. Quarterly Conflict. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/109705510/The_Values_in_Violence_Organizational_and_Political_Objectives_of_Terrorist_Groups. 11 December 2021.

[9] Ibid.

[10] https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-statistics/crime-areas/terrorism. Accessed 12 December 2021.

[11] Revolutionary, sub-revolutionary and establishment terrorism, https://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism/Types-of-terrorism. Accessed 11 December 2021.

In the Central Africa region which consists Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo Kinshasa). Republic of Congo (Congo Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda as well as Sao Tome and Principe, terrorist aggressions constitute another major threat to the security of states and populations. It harbors one of the largest countries in the entire continent, Democratic Republic of Congo which is the richest country in terms of natural resources.[12] Countries in Central Africa are members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).[13] Six of those states (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon) are also members of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and share a common currency, the Central African Franc (CFA).[14]

This region has a very deep history of indigenous civilizations, kingdoms, states, and empires. Prior to the nineteenth century, the indigenous population had evolved sophisticated and complex civilizations including kingdoms and empires which were later carved into various countries according to the whims and caprices of colonial interests in Europe.[15] The consequences were obvious. The kingdoms and empires lost their indigenous autonomy and civilizations became colonies which later became independent states from 1960.[16]

The thrust of this chapter focuses on the religious and political dimensions of terrorism in the Central African region. It argues that terrorism in Central Africa terrorism breathes violence with unforeseen consequences for states in the region and notes that the terrorist challenge in the region has been defined and redefined; contextualized and re-contextualized

[12] The DRC: A Resource rich country. https://energycapitalpower.com/a-resource-rich-country/. Accessed 12 December 2021; Also see P.E.N Tindall, *History of Central Africa* (London: Longman, 1968).

[13] Economic Community of Central African States. https://au.int/en/recs/eccas. Accessed 12 December 2021.

[14] CEMAC, https://ecfr.eu/special/african-cooperation/cemac/. Accessed 9 December 2021.

[15] https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/central-african-empires/. Accessed 9 December 2021.

[16] Stephen Ocheni and Basi C. Nwankwo, "Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa" Cross-Cultural Communication, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2012): 46–54. http://cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/j.ccc.1923670020120803.1189. Accessed 9 December 2021.

since the last decades of the dawn of the twenty-first century. It further demonstrates that there have been new patterns of terrorism in the Central African region in particular and Africa as a whole. It further illustrates that Terrorist groups and their activities have not been static. They have been dynamic; connected and in close alliance with other groups in Africa and the world at large. This is facilitated with the use of social media in which they can quickly become connected to one another by phone, internet, WhatsApp, or YouTube platforms where they preach their propaganda. David J. Blanc's[17] concept of internet wars is applied herein to show how the terrorists are also appropriating everyday technologies to fight and strike terror on the states in which they operate. The corresponding analysis is predicated on the concept of Safe Haven[18] which are areas of "relative security exploited by terrorists to indoctrinate, recruit, coalesce, train, and regroup, as well as prepare and support their operations. Physical safe havens are often found in under-governed territory or crossing international boundaries."[19] On a methodological note, this chapter relied significantly on tertiary sources as well as some of my previous works published elsewhere. The paper has been analyzed through the lenses of Islamic provinces and country by country where it is possible.

This chapter is structured into the following parts: After the introduction in which the main argument of the paper is formulated and the location of the study region among others, the second part of the paper takes up terrorism in Central Africa. This section enumerates various terrorist organizations which have carved out the region. These subregions will be taken up further in the paper. The third part of the paper focuses on the Islamic State of Central Africa Province (ISCAP) with its ancillary Ansaru Sunnah which is the hub of Salafi Jihadism ideology. The fourth part of the paper examines the various countries in which terrorist activities have taken over in the launching of their activities. These countries include, among others, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic,

[17] David J. Balnc, "The Social Network war in Africa is on". https://www.theafricareport.com/8377/the-social-network-war-in-africa-is-on. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[18] K. Judgement. "Terrorist Safe Havens".https://www.google.com/search?q=Safe+Havens+and+terrorism&rlz=1C1GCEA. Accessed 18 November 2021.

[19] Ibid. This definition is limited as concerns who is using the concept and in which context. To some critics those who are branded as terrorist are actually nationalist with an agenda which they hope to fulfilled.

Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroons terrorism. The last part is the conclusion in which the main issues raised in the paper are tied together while also at the same time showing the new ways in which future research could be taken over by future researchers.

Evolution of Terrorism in Central Africa

A casual observation suggests that the Central Africa region has become a honeycomb of terrorist activities. This has called into place international actors to find ways of combating it. For instance, in a video conference which took place on December 9, 2020, it was noted among other things that "Security and other challenges in Central Africa affect West Africa, the Great Lakes and other regions on the continent". The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), François Louncény Fall, "Insecurity across Central Africa continue to be a source of concern."[20] It is a source of concern because it has and continues to affect the people and governments of the region in varied and multifaceted ways. The power and influence of the terrorist organizations in Central Africa are remarkable. They have in a way mapped out the continent into different provinces such as the Islamic State of Central African Province; the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) and many others which will be the hallmark of the reflection on this paper beginning with ISWAP. In doing this, scholars and researchers of terrorism have come to grips with new patterns and activities taken by the terrorist groups.

Islamic State Central Africa Province

This section starts with a melo-dramatic incident which occurred in the Kampala city center. On Tuesday November 16, 2021, three bombs were detonated in Kampala, the political capital of Uganda. A terrorist group known as the Islamic State claimed to have been responsible for the two separate suicide attacks that killed three people and injured thirty-six. The Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) affiliated to Amaq News Agency

[20] Document S/2020/1154 (https://reliefweb.int/node/3695694), Accessed 13 June 2021 https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/s-2020-1154.php.

confirmed the news by reporting that three fighters set out with bags loaded with explosives. Two headed toward the Kampala Central Police Station, and the third to the parliament building, where they detonated, it reported. It was later confirmed by the Ugandan police that the attacks had resemblance of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist rebel group affiliated with the ISIS.[21]

Later in a statement on Tuesday, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni raised the number of people injured from 33 to 36 and noted that "three attackers died while detonating their bombs and seven were killed while resisting arrest."[22] In addition, a total of 81 suspects have been arrested and "apart from hunting the terrorists, the country's strategy of vigilance (alertness), is helping to minimize damage." Museveni implored the population "to maintain vigilance of checking people at entry points to bus parks, hotels, churches, mosques, markets."[23]

A synopsis of this event beams at the *modus operandi* of terrorism in Central Africa. What are the new patterns of terrorism in the region? Do we find changes and continuities in their activities? Historically, the Central Africa has received another splinter jihadist terrorist group known as Islamic State Central Africa Province. The ISCAP has affiliates known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) which are speculated to have begun in 2017 under the leadership of Musa Baluku.[24] This constitutes the Ansarus al-Sunnah (ISIS-Mozambique) and both have established connections with ISIS and also employ its social media propaganda to expand and intensify attacks in Central Africa.[25] It was the United Nations which has recently called attention to the threat of Islamic State (IS) whose expansion in Central Africa region is bringing new contours to the

[21] Tim Lister, Ruba Alhenwi, Hande Atay Alam and Samson Ntale, "Islamic State claims responsibility for Uganda bombings" https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/17/africa/uganda-islamic-state-bombing-intl-hnk/index.html. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Allied Democratic Forces. https://www.thedefensepost.com/2020/02/13/dr-congo-40-adf-fighters-captured-makeke. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[25] Tara Candland; Adam Frinck; Haroro J. Ingram; Laren Poole; Lorenzo Vidino and Caleb Weis "The Islamic State in Congo" March 2021. https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/filesThe%20Islamic%20State%20in%20Congo%20English. Accessed 7 November 2021.

socio-political map of the continent.[26] Like with other terrorist groups following the weakening of ISIS in Iraq and Syria a few years ago, the terrorists, who carried out devastating attacks in the Middle Eastern countries have suddenly, with the use of the social media infiltrated most of Africa.[27] Their activities have displaced many millions as well as destroying lives and properties. These groups are exploiting the hallmarks of fragile states which include local grievances and then utilizing radical Islamist propaganda. This has almost turned the continent into a sought-after new haven for Salafi-Jihadi terrorism.

These terrorists are consolidating and have seemingly consolidated in Africa. This is posing a significant threat in a region with numerous security problems with already existing political and socio-economic gaps. Central African sub-region is bedeviled with crisis "We are concerned about the expansion and spread of Daesh in Africa,"[28] said the Italian Foreign minister, Luigi Di Maio. According to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, "The expansion of ISIS affiliates into sub-Saharan Africa led to a surge in terrorism in many countries in the region, seven of the ten countries with the largest increase in terrorism were in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burkina Faso, Mozambique, DRC, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, and Ethiopia. This was the general picture of the African continent."[29]

While the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has seemingly "defeated" the Boko Haram terrorists in West Africa, (a point which is contested), forcing thousands of them to surrender to the Nigerian Army, different militants in Central Africa have recently intensified attacks on military forces and civilians, destroying lives, houses, mosques, and churches.[30] Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP)'s regional affiliates, particularly in Congo and Mozambique, have recruited civilians,

[26] UN Terrorism and central Africa, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/un-security-council-concerned-over-expansion-of-daesh-isis-in-africa/2340804. Accessed 7 November 2021.

[27] https://www.google.com/search?q=terrorist+in+africa&rlz=1C1GCEA_enNL972NL972&oq=Terrorist+in+Africa&aqs=chrome. Accessed 10 November 2021.

[28] https://humanglemedia.com/iscap-how-islamic-state-is-expanding-in-central-africa/. Accessed November 7. 2021.

[29] Institute for Economics and Peace. "Global Terrorism Index 2020". https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf. Accessed 10 November 2021.

[30] https://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/methodsandtrends/documents/terrorist-financing-west-central-africa.html. Accessed 18 November 2021.

seized towns, and destroyed lives and property in the region. This group also operates in Uganda and parts of Tanzania.[31] Further secondary sources suggest that since 2017, there are records of approximately 600 attacks which have resulted in the deaths of over 3,000 people and the displacement of 800,000 others. Such activities appears to have a devastating effect on Africa South of the Sahara.[32]

The ISCAP is made up of two arms: Ansarus al-Sunnah in Mozambique; Allied for Democratic Forces (ADF), which is a Ugandan-based rebel group operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).[33] However, researchers have contested and stated no clear link between the two groups other than their affiliation with IS. ISCAP's affiliates, like most terrorist organizations in Africa, include fighters from various countries to advance the Salafi-Jihadi agenda in multiple parts of the world.[34] These mobile jihadists and/or terrorists are trooping and making inroads into various regions training and recruiting civilians to join them in the war.

Like any other terrorist group in Africa, its leadership is firmly in the hands of "capable men."[35] The leaders of ISCAP include among others Ansarus Sunnah and ADF, Abu Yasir, and Seka Musa Buluku.[36] They have both been specially dubbed as global terrorists by the United States, as well as their organizations which have also been known as foreign terrorist organizations by the UN. There is no doubt that because of their similarities and differences critics and scholars have referred to the two groups

[31] "IntelBrief: Islamic State Expanding Central Africa Province with Attack in Tanzania" https://intelbrief-islamic-state-expanding-central-africa-province-with-attack-in-tanzania. Accessed 14 November 2021.

[32] Amanda Makosso and Aureole Collinet, "Islamic State of Central Africa Province (ISCAP): A threat to regional stability and security". *The Journal of Intelligence Conflict and Warfare*, Vol. 4, No.1 (2021), 96–111.

[33] James Barnett, "The 'Central Africa' Jihad: Islamism and Nation Building in Mozambique and Uganda, (2020). https://www.hudson.org/research/16471-the-central-african-jihad-islamism-and-nation-building-in-mozambique-and-uganda. Accessed 18 November 2021.

[34] For more on Salafi Jihadism see Shiraz Maher, *Salafi Jihadism: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[35] https://icct.nl/publication/male-supremacist-terrorism-as-a-rising-threat/. Accessed 12 December 2021.

[36] ISCAP: How Islamic State Is Expanding In Central Africa. https://humanglemedia.com/iscap-how-islamic-state-is-expanding-in-central-africa/. Accessed 17 November 2021.

as ISIS-Mozambique and ISIS-DRC, and their attacks have been featured in numerous IS propaganda videos.[37]

Ansaru Sunnah: From Sectarianism to Terrorism

Ansaru al-Sunnah, formerly known as Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah and locally as al-Shabab, is the official name of the Salafi-Jihadists in Mozambique's Delgado Province.[38] It is distinct from the Somali terrorist organization al-Shabab. Like its counterparts operating in the Sahelian region of West Africa, in its attempt to establish an Islamic state, the terrorist group has employed a violent interpretation of Sharia law to justify and carry out attacks on military and civilian targets.[39] The consequences have been devastating, and they were able to control a swath of land and ports in Mocimboa da Praia through religious propaganda and exploitation of local grievances.[40] The group's origins have been traced back to a radical Kenyan cleric named Abdoud Rogo Muhammed, who gathered religious zealots around him with his oratory skills and logical prowess.[41] Before his death at the hands of Kenyan security forces, he was accused of having ties to al-Shabab in Somalia. The United States has described him as someone who had been "engaging in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia,"[42] specifically to recruit and fundraise for hardline radical youths.

[37] Media Note Office of the Spokesperson. State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Leaders in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique. https://www.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique. Accessed 16 November 2021.

[38] Africa Report Nº 303. "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique and Cabo Delgado" (2021). https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/303-mozambique-cabo-delgado%20%281%29.pdf. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[39] James Barnett, "The 'Central Africa' Jihad". Retrieved from https://www.hudson.org/research/16471-the-central-african-jihad-islamism-and-nation-building-in-mozambique-and-uganda. Accessed 11 December 2021.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Aboud Rogo https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/751/materials/summaries/individual/aboud-rogo-mohammed. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[42] https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/751/materials/summaries/individual/abubaker-shariff-ahmed. Accessed 12 December 2021.

Like the Boko Haram members in Nigeria, Rogo has vocally rejected formal and or Western education through his speeches, which were mostly recorded on CDs and uploaded to social media. He was accused of brainwashing youths through mosque lectures and his "Sirajul Munir" schools. Rogo was killed in a shootout which occurred at his home in Mombasa, Kenya, in August 2012 but his mission was not ended as the government expected.[43] The security agencies underestimated his influence on his followers. Following what appeared to be frequent police raids on his mosque, hundreds of Rogo followers migrated to the Kenyan coast and further to various geographical locations, which included Somalia. Others still, crossed into Tanzania and went ahead to establish a presence in Kibiti in 2015, while others again slipped and crept into Mozambique via Tanzania.[44]

Ansaru al-Sunnah was founded in 2015 in the northern Mozambican port town of Mocimboa da Praia and it is a Salafi Islamic organization which claims to be dissatisfied with the region's local Sufi practices. "Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa's narrative hardened as sectarian tensions escalated and the group fell into a dispute with authorities over its radical interpretations of Islam and characterization of Sufi Muslims.[45] These exclusivist views crystallized further when the group incorporated the followers of Aboud Rogo Mohammed, the leader of al-Hijra, a Kenyan group allied to the al-Shabaab in Somalia."[46] It has been estimated that the Ansarus Sunnah terrorist group has an estimated 1,000 fighters operating in Cabo Delgado, which is already an impoverished Muslim-majority province bordering Tanzania. The group like most of such terrorist groups in other parts of Africa is taking advantage of the national government's "Achilles heels" governance which is encapsulated in socio-economic problems, ethnic and religious marginalization and to a very large extent weak states

[43] https://humanglemedia.com/iscap-how-islamic-state-is-expanding-in-central-africa. Accessed 14 November 2017.

[44] https://www.refworld.org/docid/53df59974.html. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[45] Maher, *Salafi Jihadism*.

[46] Spahic Mustafa Omer, "The Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al Jama,ah Factor and the Rise of Sufi Institutions: An Anaysis". https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334464148. Accessed 17 November 2021.

structured.[47] Ansarus Sunnah launched its first serious and violent attack in October 2017 in the port town of Mocimboa da Praia, targeting three police stations.[48] Although it appears that all the countries of the ISCAP are affected, Equatorial Guinea appears an exception to the rule. The interest of the paper will now turn to Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Republic.

Equatorial Guinea

Within a space of about two decades, terrorist acts have taken an unprecedented level, the Global community has given birth to Indices. Generally, global indices have offered citizens, academics, and policy-makers multifarious ways to measure change in the world. Some of the key areas constitute conflict, corruption, gender discrimination, human rights, happiness, peace, and other phenomena which were once thought too difficult to assess just by mere statistical means.[49] This explains why over the past few decades universities, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and multilateral institutions have developed data-driven assessments for these abstract ideas.[50] These indices give only approximations of where goals have been achieved and where more work needs to be done by future researchers and scholars interested in terrorism activities. So far, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is yet to provide assertive data on acts of terrorism in Equatorial Guinea.[51]

Furthermore, it has also been maintained that it is a composite score that ranks countries according to the impact of terrorism ranging from 0 (no impact) to 10 (highest impact). Thus following the Equatorial Guinea Terrorism Index, it has been reported that while some countries in the sub-region are shivering under the threat of terrorism Equatorial Guinea has not recorded any direct attack from the terrorist. The government has

[47] Emilia Columbo, "Insurgency Marks New Milestone in Coastal Attack in Northern Mozambique" (2020). https://www.csis.org/analysis/insurgency-marks-new-milestone-coastal-attack-northern-mozambique. Accessed 18 November 2021.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Global Indexes. https://theglobalobservatory.org/2016/09/catalogue-indices/. Accessed 18 November 2019.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Equatorial Guinea and Terrorism. https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/equatorial-guinea/terrorism. Accessed 18 November 2021.

constantly warned that the state should be aware of terrorist acts.[52] As far back as 2015 President Teodoro Obiang Nguema warned the country of a serious terrorist threat and immediately deployed security forces in their numbers throughout the capital, Malabo.[53] Yet, there was no such attack.

Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR) which is obsessed with conflict, had an additional burden which is the weight of terrorism. Peter Knoop and Stephen Buchannan-Clark in their excellent and penetrating article have identified three strands in relation to terrorism in CAR. Firstly, they assume that there is the potential for ideological recruitment and radicalization into violent extremism and this involves the establishment of transnational terrorist organizations in CAR.[54] According to them, this has added a new caveat of complexity to an already multi-faceted crisis which has befuddled the country since its independence. The CAR's rebel groups who have factionalized the state and have generally been willing to negotiate with the government and sign onto peace deals, as seen in other contexts while violent jihadist/terrorist organizations are not often unwilling to do the same.[55]

Apparently, this has generated some sought of obdurate conflict without political solution in sight just like in other areas of the region. Besides, the infiltration of CAR by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, the Islamic State, or Al Shabaab, have seemingly simmered into further regionalize and internationalize CAR's conflict and help to inflame the fuel which already strained intra-Muslim and Muslim/Christian relations.[56] While there have been claims that the ex- Séléka and other Muslim organizations have been infiltrated by violent terrorist elements are relatively common in CAR, ascertaining their validity is

[52] Ibid.

[53] Equatorial Guinea's president warns of 'serious terrorist' threat to country. https://english.alarabiya.net/News/africa/2015/03/20/E-Guinea-s-president-warns-of-serious-terrorist-threat-to-country. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[54] Peter Knoope and Stephen Buchanan-Clark, "Central African Republic: A Conflict Misunderstood". https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/CAR_Report.pdf. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

difficult, and the researchers found no clear evidence to prove the case. However, the country currently has several factors that are commonly understood as preconditions to the spread and emergence of violent extremism. Existing preconditions for recruitment and radicalization into violent Extremism.

Another factor which has been advanced by Knoop and Clark is that CAR constitutes geographic Safe Havens. CAR has a number of preconditions for the emergence and spread of violent extremism- it is a vast country of 622,984 km, much of which remains largely ungoverned, and shares porous borders with Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These porous borders have led to the infiltration of terrorists in most parts of Africa not in CAR. This has provided ample and ocular space for geographic "safe spaces."[57] According to Daniel L. Byman, safe spaces or Safe Havens in terrorism verbiage are used to "plot, recruit, proselytize, contact supports around the world, raise money and – perhaps most importantly – enjoy respite from the enemy regimes counter-terrorism effort that enables operatives to escape the constant stress that characterizes life underground."[58] By and large these spaces give terrorist groups advantages to link and communicate with each other with the use of social media platforms.

Within the safe space repertoire, LRA is already using the Eastern region of CAR as a safe space to evade troops of the African Union Regional Task Force. In a very similar way, the North-Eastern region of the CAR has also long been used as a safe haven and operational base which is used by Chadian and Sudanese rebel groups. There has been increased military pressure on Boko Haram which is based in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, and CAR's porous borders with (seemingly increasingly unstable) Cameroon and Chad, the country may provide a new safe haven for the group from which to operate and recruit.[59]

The Crime–Terror Nexus and the disintegration of the formal Séléka alliance and failure of the CAR's Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion, and Repatriation program (DDRR) to bring the primary rebel

[57] Knoope and Buchanan-Clark, "Central African Republic: A Conflict Misunderstood".

[58] Daniel L. Byman, "The Changing Nature of State Sponsoreship of Terrorism" *Analysis Paper*, Volume 16 (2008).

[59] Safe Havens. https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/65466.pdf. Accessed 17 November 2021.

groups to the negotiating table have seen the increase of criminality across the North of the country, as rebel groups turn to banditry to sustain themselves.[60] According to Mathew D. Phillips and Emily A. Kanem, "Cooperation and imitation among crime and terror groups in recent years has given rise to a crime-terror nexus… symbiotic relationships between criminals and terrorists represent insidious threats to regional and international security wherever they exist."[61] This is characterized by Illicit financial flows and the illegal trade of diamonds, ivory, gold, and other minerals, coupled with low levels of police or authoritative oversight, could provide important sources of income for transnational terrorist organizations operating in the region to exploit. This is largely because the state can no longer take its responsibility.[62]

The characteristics of CAR are quite obvious and not unique as these characteristics are also in region. "The Youth Bulge and Exploitation of Local Populations Decades of conflict, corruption, and poor governance has generated a deep well of discontent toward the CAR government in communities both inside and outside the capital."[63] A closed political class and an acute lack of educational or economic opportunity mean the chance of the average Central African being able to change their station in life is small. CAR has an extremely young population with a median age of just 20.4 years, of which, 68% have not completed primary education, and the overwhelming majority hold no formal employment.[64] Many of these youth are idle, regularly experience food insecurity, have been traumatized by repeated exposure to violence, and feel marginalized by a political system which seems only to serve a political elite. This lack of

[60] Central Africa Republic DDRR, https://www.google.com/search?q=DDRR+programme&rlz=1C1GCEA_enNL972NL972&oq=DDRR+programme. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[61] Mathew D. Phillips and Emily A. Kanem, "Entering the Black Hole: The Taliban, Terrorism and Organised Crimes" *Journal of Terrorism Research,* Volume 5, Issue 3(2014): 1–10.

[62] Ibid.

[63] The Bulge Youth and Civil Terrorist. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/effects-youth-bulge-civil-conflicts. Accessed 18 November 2021.

[64] Valerizza Izzi, Promoting Decent Employment for African Youth as a Peacebuilding. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_744700.pdf. Accessed 17 November 2021.

hope and frustration provides a pool of potential recruits.[65] The youths are the pivot on which all terrorism in Africa rotates.

The vulnerability of the CAR, giving rise to terrorism, is further accentuated by other factors worth appreciating. This can be found in the present as well as in the *longue durée*. The absence of a National Ideology (like in most African countries because of its transplantation) and the Persecution of Muslims developing an inclusive national ideology in CAR is a whole factor on its own. This might have helped to promote resilience against extremist narratives, unfortunately, this has always been a challenge.[66] Even further into the colonial period one can quickly notice that before colonization, the CAR sub-region was populated by a disparate mix of a mosaic of ethnic groups.[67] The Trans-Saharan slave trade which was the antecedent of colonialism, had a tonic influence over CAR's political system by Muslim Chadian and the Sudanese governments.[68] This has perpetuated negative perceptions against Muslim Central Africans as the political ramifications of colonialism have remained among African societies to date.[69]

Like many African countries that border on ethnic identities, CAR is not an exemption. The predominantly Muslim north of the country has been largely excluded from the political power corridor, held by a majority Christian political elite in Bangui. Over the years, the North has experienced little government investment in the form of health care, education, or economic investment and entire regions, such as Vakaga, are totally cut off from the rest of the country during the several months of the rainy season.[70] There is no doubt even as far back as yesterday only two parliamentarians of the government seated in Bangui were Muslim. This suggests outright marginalization and injustice. Any opportunity that this

[65] Ibid.

[66] History of Central African Republic. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Central_African_Republic. Accessed 12 December 2021.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Trans-Sahara Trade and Central Africa Republic, https://www.google.com/search?q=Trans-Saharan+Trade+and+Central+African+Republic&rlz=1C1GCEA. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[69] Colonisation in Central African Republic, https://www.google.com/search?q=Colonialism+in+Central+African+Republic&rlz. Accessed 18 November 2021.

[70] World Bank in C A R, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/centralafricanrepublic/overview#1. Accessed 17 November 2021.

group can find to redress this will be immediately executed and most of the time it becomes vitriolic in nature.[71] Séléka leaders, such as Djotodia, were quick and smart to exploit these grievances as a way of mobilizing support against the central government and advocating for a secession of the North of the country and establishment of a "Republic of Logone, or Dar El Kuti."[72] A parallel of this was the Anglophones of Cameroon who created a utopia country known as the Republic of Ambazonia (We shall return to this soon in this paper). In the case of the CAR, the terrorist found a breathing ground as a consequence.

Furthermore, widespread protests have been held against the erection and construction of Mosques in the city. Muslims in PK5[73] reported feeling both threatened and humiliated by anti-Balaka groups and the continued presence of MINUSCA force.[74] Criminals routinely target Muslim communities as "easy targets" knowing they are unlikely to report crimes to the police. Muslim/Christian relations in CAR are the worst they have been since independence.[75] It is easy to see how in this environment, violent jihadist organizations could exploit and have actually exploited the situation to offer empowering new contours to the narrations that already existed. Several gullible and frustrated individuals within the CAR and even the entire Central African region and who are targets of terrorist groups, leverage on the promises of the new narrative to avail

[71] Muslims being 'erased' from CAR, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/7/31/muslims-being-erased-from-central-african-republic. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[72] Republic of Logone, or Dar El Kuti. https://www.google.com/search?q=Republic+. Accessed 18 November.

[73] PK5 is a commercial centre; it is the economic heart of the city of Bangui. The first Muslims from Chad or Sudan would pass through there to sell their merchandise, and little by little, they started to settle down, and other Muslims from neighbouring cities or regions followed. They married local girls from the Central African Republic, established roots, and bought houses. Many of them also became Central African citizens, For more see https://www.kaiciid.org/news-events/news/central-african-republic-what-pk5. Accessed 12 December 2021.

[74] https://www.google.com/search?q=minusca+forces+in+central+african+republic&rlz=1C1GCEA. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[75] Henry Kam Kah, Anti-Balaka/Séléka, "'Religionisation' and Separatism in the History of the Central African Republic" *Conflict Studies Quarterly* Issue 9 (October 2014): 30–48. http://www.csq.ro/wp-content/uploads/CSQ-9.-Kam-Kah.pdf. Accessed 18 November 2021.

themselves for recruitment and radicalization to terrorism and violent extremism.[76]

Cameroon

One of the countries which has been hard hit by terrorists but has an exceptional way of dealing with terrorists' attacks has been Cameroon. In North Cameroon, the Islamic Jihadist in an attempt to carve out a caliphate in the likes of Uthman Dan Fodio has, since the late 1990s, continuously disturbed the lives of individuals and civilians. Modern Cameroon is a colonial construct and is made up of Anglophones and Francophones which reflect dual colonial legacy.[77] Although it was initially colonized by Germany, most German cultural influences were obliterated by the French and British periods of administration.[78]

In the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, which prior to reunification to French-administered Cameroon (under the United Nations Trusteeship system) in October 1961 constituted the former British-administered Southern Cameroons, comprising of English speakers referred to as Anglophones, the Government of Cameroon has described the various groups engaged in armed struggle for an independent State of Ambazonia as terrorists. To better appreciate terrorism in this section of Cameroon its brief political history is imperative. The Anglophones in Cameroon are a minority, constituting about one-fifth of the population and occupying less than one-tenth of the national territory.[79] Recently, Anglophone Cameroonians have been seeking autonomy of an imaginary state which they called Ambazonia but which geographically constitutes the erstwhile British Southern Cameroons and which is

[76] Peter Knoop and Stephen Buchannan-Clark, "Central African Republic: A Conflict Misunderstood", https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/CAR_Report.pdf. Accessed 24 October 2021.

[77] Nicodemus Fru Awasum, "Colonial Background to the Development of Autonomous Tendencies in Anglophone Cameroon, 1916–1961". *Journal of Third World Studies* xv, 1: (1998): 168–183.

[78] Walter Gam Nkwi, "Colonial Hegemonies at loggerheads: British 'De-Germanisation' Policy in British Cameroons, 1916-c.1961" In Wazi Akpoh and Beal Lundt eds., 71–92. *Germany and Its West African Colonies: "Excavations" of German Colonialism in Post Colonial Times*, Berlin, Germany: LitVerlag, 2013.

[79] Nicodemuc Fru Awasum, Op. Cit.

today simply known as the Northwest and Southwest regions.[80] They started searching for an autonomous region within a federal framework as opposed to the unitary system of government that presently exists in the country, but when this failed, they resorted to outright independence. Scholarly debates, discussions, and speculations about the origin and the real motive for the Anglophone quest for autonomy are very topical and relevant for the Cameroon nation-building experiment. But there is either no unanimity on the issue between Anglophones and Francophones or the explanations afforded are simplistic and incomplete. By misinterpreting or misunderstanding the Anglophone desire for autonomy, Cameroonian authorities and their activities have further pushed some of the Anglophones to a tight corner in which they have decided to fight back since 2016.

However, one of the causes which seems to be the convincing reason for what is going on in Anglophone Cameroon is the role which the United Nations and Britain played in her decolonizing mission. The separatists' movements, which is the name given to the Anglophones fighting for their autonomy, resorted to war with the Cameroon Francophone-led government in 2017. The other cause is the failure of the post-colonial government of Cameroon to forge a sustainable and unified nation state. The Anglophone War of Independence, also known as the Ambazonia War of Independence, began in January 2017 after the ring leaders of the Ambazonia struggle were kidnapped in Nigeria and brought back to Cameroon where they are jailed presently. The arrests were the final straw that escalated the simmering Anglophone marginalization which is assumed by some Anglophones to have existed for more than 50 years. The Francophone-dominated government failed to address the issues raised by the lawyers and teachers.

Quite interestingly, the nationalists were soon branded as secessionists and terrorists by the government. Violence and/or terrorism in the country's Anglophone zone of north-west and south-west regions have become perennial and since 2017 both the military and separatists have been targeting civilians, including students, teachers, the clergy, and

[80] Victor Julius Ngoh, The Origin of the Marginalisation of Former Southern Cameroonians (Anglophones), 1961–1966: An Historical Analysis. *Journal of Third World Studies* 160 (1999): 165–183. For the complete updated history of Cameroon see his other book, Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884 - Present: The History of a People* (Limbe, Cameroon: Design House, 2020).

burning of schools. Villages have been reduced to "football fields" and the civilian populations roasted and buried overnight. These acts are collectively committed by both the separatists and the military although the military has been assumed to commit more of the atrocities than the separatists. The Ngarbu incident in which more than 25 civilians including women, men, and children were burnt on February 14, 2020, is a case in point.[81] Although the Cameroon government initially denied her military responsibility over the terrorist attacks, she finally accepted and expressed regret and also took the culprits and perpetrators to court. In North Cameroon, the terrorist group, Boko Haram, has also been noted as a terrorist group which has wreaked havoc.

Terrorism has long been in Cameroon political chemistry predating the 2016 uprisings and new appellations of the word. This goes back to 1962, following the defeat of the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* rebellion which in earnest started in the last decades of the French colonial administration in Cameroon and soon engulfed the entire Sanaga-Maritime region extending its tentacles to the British Southern Cameroons and the Eastern Grass fields of Cameroon.[82] By using the French colonial forces, divide and rule tactics and finally branding the rebellion to be communist inclined the French colonial administration ferociously dealt a blow at this movement and by 1971 it was a dead letter. Two years after independence, President Ahidjo, the first President of Cameroon, passed into law in 1962, anti-subversion law. It was an emergency law passed then to speedily combat the high wave of terrorism that prevailed in the country in the early days of independence.[83] Cases tried on this law circumvented the normal judicial process in the regular courts and went to military courts which are supposed to be speedier with no appeals except with presidential interventions to reduce or cancel the court sentence. Most persons tried under the 1962 statute were either sentenced to death or to

[81] Cameroon's Ngarbuh massacre: revenge, blunder, or manipulation? www.theafricareport.com/23679/cameroons-ngarbuh-massacre-revenge-blunder-or-manipulation. Accessed 13 June 2021.

[82] For more on this see, Meredith Terrata, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

[83] Richard Joseph, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroon: The Social Origins of the UPC Rebellion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

one of the political prisons which were actually torture houses as most of its inmates came back less human, if at all.[84]

In 2014 President Paul Biya (one of the longest-serving presidents in the world), promulgated into law, Law No. 2014/028 of December 23, 2014, on the suppression of acts of terrorism. This was following the Boko Haram insurgency which has been operating in the North and Far North regions of the country in an attempt to carve out a caliphate. Among other things, the purpose and scope stated that, the law relates to the suppression of the acts of terrorism; the provisions of the penal code, the criminal procedure code, and the military justice code that are not repugnant to this law shall remain applicable while offenses provided for in this law shall fall under the jurisdiction of military tribunals. Section two of that law dealt with offenses and penalties relating to acts of terrorism and maintain *inter alia*:

> Whoever, acting alone as an accomplice or accessory, commits or threatens to commit an act likely to cause death, endanger physical integrity, cause bodily injury or material damage, destroy natural resources, the environment or cultural heritage with intent to: a). Intimidate the public, provoke a situation of terror or face the victim, the government and/or a national or international organization to carry out or refrain. From carrying out an act, adopt or renounce a particular position; b). Disrupt the national functioning of public services, the delivery of essential services to the public to create a crisis situation among the public; c). Create widespread insurrection in the country; d) shall be punished with the death penalty…. Section three provides acts of terrorism and these acts maintain, whoever directly or indirectly provides and/or collects funds and provides or offers or collects funds with the aim of financing acts of terrorism and by whatever means, shall be punished with the death penalty and the financing of terrorism shall be deemed to have been perpetrated even where the goods are collected and the services are offered in the territory of another.[85]

Section four is about laundering of proceeds of terrorism which whoever, procures, receives, keeps, converts, dissimulates, or disguises goods that are proceeds or acts of terrorism; partakes in the use or sharing even occasionally, of proceeds of acts of terrorism, shall be punished with the death

[84] Kimbi Z. Ndefru, "The 1962 Subversion Ordinance: Just or Unjust" *Cameroon Post* Monday July 23–30, 1990.

[85] Ibid.

penalty. Section five handled recruitment and training and maintains that whoever recruits and or trains people to participate in the act of terrorism, regardless of where they are committed, shall be punished with a death penalty and this penalty shall be applied to whoever offers promises gifts, presents, or any kind of benefit to another with the intention of getting the later to be part of a group that has been established or a deal reached to commit acts of terrorism; threatens or pressurizes another to be part of a group that has been established or a deal reached to commit acts of terrorism; whoever deliberately joins or undergoes training in a terrorist group with intent to commit acts of terrorism within the country, shall be punished with imprisonment of from ten to twenty years. In the cases provided for the subsection (2) above, the offense shall be deemed to have been committed even where urging someone to be part of the group or deal fail to materialize. Section eight states that whoever publicly acclaims acts of terrorism shall be punished with imprisonment of, from fifteen to twenty years or a fine of, from twenty-five million francs (25,000,000) FCFA to fifty million (50,000,000) or both such imprisonment and fine. Section nine maintains that whoever makes a false statement or defamatory report to an administrative or judicial authority pursuant to Sections seven and sixteen of this law shall be punished with imprisonment of twenty years.[86] Whatever way we look at this anti-terrorism law, the blind spots are clear. The government which gave birth to the law has gone very far in its interpretation to repress and subjugate human rights. It was in this regard, that Jean-Claude N. Ashukem maintains that, "Cameroon's Law No. 2014/028 of December 23, 2014, on the Suppression of Acts of Terrorism (Anti-Terrorism Law) was enacted to counter-terrorism activities, including the notorious Boko Haram insurgency operating in the northern part of the country. However, the government's approach to terrorism has greatly constrained the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental human rights in other parts of the country far away from the jurisdiction of Boko Haram's activities."[87]

Furthermore, coined in a typical *letter de cachet* fashion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries France, a closer look at the meaning and the act to suppress terrorism according to the Cameroon government has been

[86] Ibid.

[87] Jean-Claude N. Ashukem, "To give a dog a bad name to kill it – Cameroon's anti-terrorism law as a strategic framework for human rights' violations," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 39:1 (2021): 119–134.

condemned by several critics as illogically matured. This is borne out of a government which seems to have apparently lost legitimacy with the people whom she is governing. Cameroon is a democratic country when it comes to making laws and putting structures in place. The influence of the state is really felt only when violence is concerned. Repression has become the watchword of the regime since 1962 and has taken a higher velocity since the 1990s and exploded since 2017.[88] In most African countries, the repressive and ideological apparatus are used interchangeably because the state always wants to balance the two but in Cameroon the repressive apparatus is omnipresent and is used most of the time. Police and military camps have become sites of fear and intimidation to the population. To most of the population gendarmes, police and soldiers are simply worse than tigers and hyenas. The difference between the Suppression of Terrorism Law (2014) with the Anti-Subversion Law of 1962 is so tiny and shows a country that since independence has been battling with what she calls terrorism. The Anglophone groups who have been labeled terrorist emerged to redress some of the grievances that have plagued this part of the country stretching as far back as 1961. The military has been employed at all levels to deal with issues that have been branded as terrorism. The Anglophones assume that they have been marginalized for close to 50 years since they came into union with their "brothers" in French Cameroon. An attempt to demand for a redress of their grievances has led to the government to call and brand most of them as terrorists. It is relevant to examine in detail their assumed grievances and the government's reaction to such "dissenting voices."

The consequences of terrorism in Cameroon committed by both the separatists and military have been telling. According to the UN, the fighting has forced several thousand Cameroonians to flee to Nigeria as refugees. Anglophone Cameroonians began fleeing violence in October 2017 and continue to pour into Nigeria's Cross River, Taraba, Benue, and Akwa-Ibom states. In total, over 20,000 refugees have been registered in the area. Women and children account for four-fifths of the population. A recent assessment by humanitarian groups shows how grim the situation has become. Ninety-five percent of the asylum seekers have no more than three days of food. Most families are down to one meal per day. The coping strategies people are using are themselves risky, and range from

[88] For more on the repressive machine of Cameroon government see, Achille Mbembe, *On the Post Colony* (California: University of California Press, 2001).

borrowing money to cutting food portions or saving food only for children.[89] Apart from the refugees in Nigeria more than 700,000 people are displaced across the national territory. Villages have been razed by the Cameroonian military.[90]

Schools, both government and denominational schools were shut down in 2016 under the command of the separatists but in 2020 timidly, mission and private schools were allowed to re-opened yet atrocities went on unabated. Thousands of students and pupils were deprived as a result of terrorism so to say. The separatists have enforced an unpopular school boycott since 2016 to protest what they see as the dismantling of the region's separate education system, and its assimilation within French-speaking Cameroon. The turning point for public sympathy came in on October 24, 2020, when armed men stormed a school in Kumba in the Southwest region and killed seven children with 13 others wounded. Nobody has claimed responsibility for the attack, although the government blamed the separatists. The Kumba killing became just one in a series. In November 2020, gunmen attacked Kulu Memorial College in the Southwest region, stripped both teachers and students naked, and tortured them for attending school in violation of the No School dictates of the pro-Ambazonia fighting groups. Subsequently, 11 teachers were kidnapped by armed men suspected to be pro-Ambazonia fighters, from a mission school in Kumbo, Northwest region barely 24 hours after the Kulu Memorial College incident but released after two days, following pressure from civil society groups and the Presbyterian Church.[91]

Another terrorist group whose activities span Northern Cameroon, Southern Chad, and Northern Central African Republic is Boko Haram. It is a pseudo-salafi organization with origin from Nigeria's northeast geo-political zone but now has presence in the Republic of Chad, Niger, northern Cameroon, and the Central African Republic. It was founded

[89] Anglophone Cameroonians in Nigeria pass 20,000 mark. Accessed 26 May 2021. https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2018/3/5ab0cf2b4/anglophone-cameroonians-nigeria-pass-20000-mark.html.

[90] 'This is a genocide': villages burn as war rages in blood-soaked Cameroon. Accessed 10 June 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/may/30/cameroon-killings-escalate-anglophone-crisis.

[91] Emeline Fonyuy, In Cameroon's separatist war, children are the biggest losers: 'I now know the choking effect of tear gas and the sounds of live bullets.' Accessed 6 June 2021. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/firstperson/2021/2/16/Cameroons-separatist-war-children-biggest-losers.

in 2002 and initially led by Mohammed Yusuf till his death in 2009 after which Abubakar Shekau, who prior to his death in 2021, assumed leadership of the Boko Haram and transformed the group from a local Nigerian terrorist organization to a globally designated terrorist organization by the United Nations Security Council prior to his death in 2021. When the group was first formed, their touted goal was to "purify" Islam in northern Nigeria, with the belief that jihad should be delayed until the group was strong enough to overthrow the Nigerian government.[92] In mid-2014, the militants gained control of swaths of territory in and around state of Borno estimated at 50,000 square kilometers (20,000 square miles) and declared a short-lived caliphate with administrative capital at Gworza in northeast Nigeria.

Realizing that its capacity to survive was fast dwindling in view of the intensified national, sub-regional, and international counterterrorism assaults, Abubakar Shekau sought international support by pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi led Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) on March 7, 2015, and was franchised to operate as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).[93] According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) media report, due to internal disputes between the two groups, hundreds of terrorists left Boko Haram and formed their own organization, named as Islamic State in West Africa. In September 2015, the Director of Information at the Defense Headquarters of Nigeria announced that all Boko Haram camps had been destroyed but attacks from the group continued. In 2019, president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari claimed that Boko Haram was "technically defeated." However, attacks by Boko Haram have escalated and it still poses a major threat as of 2019.[94] In May 2021, Nigerian officials and a

[92] Kyari Mohammed, The Origins of Boko Haram. Accessed 13 June 2021. https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198804307.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198804307-e-42.

[93] Boko Haram Nigerian Islamic group. Accessed 25 May 2021. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Boko-Haram.

[94] Boko Haram: Nigerian president admits failure to end violence. Accessed 14 May 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57452166.

separate investigation conducted by *The Wall Street Journal* substantiated the claims that Shekau was dead.[95]

The group has been known for its brutality, and since the insurgency began in 2009, Boko Haram has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced 2.3 million from their homes, and was at one time the world's deadliest terror group according to the Global Terrorism Index which measures the direct and indirect impacts of terrorism, its effects on the lives especially deaths, injuries, property damage and the psychological after effects on regions in which they operate. Boko Haram has contributed to regional food crises and famines.[96] Of the 2.3 million people displaced by the conflict since May 2013, at least 250,000 have left Nigeria and fled to Cameroon, Chad and Niger. In April 2014, the Shekau-led Boko Haram carried out mass abductions including the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls at the Government Girls School in Chibok, Borno State in April 2014 and by the end of the year, the Boko Haram terrorism was estimated to have resulted to the death of over 6,600 people.[97]

Chad

The Republic of Chad appears to be one of the countries in Central Africa that has been most hit by terrorism through the activities of Boko Haram. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa have continued attacks with heightened velocity and intensity since 2019 in and around the eastern and northern shores of Lake Chad. This was carried out approximately two per week with very deep consequences by the terrorists. As a matter of fact, many of these attacks were and consisted of small raids which were meant to plunder supplies, but at the same time these terrorist groups also mounted several larger attacks of one hundred or more fighters on Chadian military outposts. One of the newest tactics carried out by this was rebirth and the re-emergence of suicide bombings by young women on civilian targets in Chad which heightened tensions. The Chadian

[95] Jack Detsch and Robbie Gramer, "Is the Leader of Boko Haram Really Dead This Time?" Accessed 13 June 2021. https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/27/boko-haram-abubakar-shekau-death-nigeria-terrorism/.

[96] Brutal History of Boko Haram. Accessed 13 June 2021. https://www.trtworld.com/news/brutal-history-of-boko-haram.

[97] Ibid.

government deployed several Chadian military units which in turn were also attacked with Improvised Explosives Devices acronym IEDs. This included one in May 2019 that killed four Chadian soldiers and one journalist. Yet that was not an end to the terrorist attacks as in October, terrorists went an extra mile and kidnapped a medical doctor and two nurses. All of them are employees of the Chadian Ministry of Health. The terrorists needed them to provide treatment to wounded terrorist fighters.[98] These hostages were never recovered.

The Chadian government headed by Idriss Deby has been the bulwark of the Western Allies who are bent to fight the terrorist groups in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin sub-region. The incident spurred further deployments of Chadian security forces to the region. Former Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno ordered an extensive military offensive in April 2020 against Boko Haram after around 100 Chadian soldiers were killed in the region. Chadian troops pursued the militants in Nigeria and Niger as part of the "Wrath of Bomo" operation, killing roughly 1,000 Boko Haram militants.[99] The challenges posed by Boko Haram in Lake Chad, especially Chad, have been the highest. Chadian forces have been fighting and on April 20, 2021, the Chadian President, Idriss Deby led the forces in the North of the country to fight Boko Haram forces.[100] Idriss Deby who was notorious for joining his soldiers on the battlefront in his military fatigues is said to have visited the Chadian troops on the frontline. This was after rebels based across the northern frontier in Libya advanced hundreds of km (miles) south toward the capital N'Djamena.[101] The advancing of these terrorists threatened the national sovereignty of Chad. This meant that President Deby was to give a boost to his soldiers. "Marshal Idriss Deby Itno, as he did each time that the institutions of the republic were gravely threatened, took control of operations during the

[98] Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Chad. Accessed 11 August 2021. https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/chad/.

[99] Chad: Dozens of soldiers dead after jihadi attack. Accessed 11 August 2021. https://www.dw.com/en/chad-dozens-of-soldiers-deadafter-jihadi-attack/a-58775413.

[100] Chad's President Idriss Déby has died of his injuries following clashes with rebels in the north of the country at the weekend, the army has said. Accessed 11 August 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56815708.

[101] Chad President Idriss Deby killed on frontline, son to take over. https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/chad-president-idriss-deby-has-died-says-army-spokesman-2021-04-20/. Accessed 11 August 2021.

heroic combat led against the terrorists from Libya. He was wounded during the fighting and died on return to N'Djamena."[102] Thus the gravity of terrorism in Chad and the attempt of the government to fight back ended up consuming the life of Idriss Deby. The DRC which is the largest country in the Central African sub-region is another country plagued by terrorist activities. It is the DRC that the attention of this paper will turn.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced an increase in violent extremism and terrorist attacks since 2014 especially in the province of Northern Kivu where the Alliance of Democratic Forces National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) is alleged to have established links with al-Shabaab.[103] Being the largest country in Central Africa and the richest in terms of natural resources, foreign powers are always at its precincts to devour and take advantage of instability. In 1995 the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), radiated its *modus operandi* from Uganda into the Northern sector of DRC. It is therefore a foreign terrorist group. Historically, the ADF is assumed to have been created in northern Uganda by former military officers who were loyal to the former Ugandan strongman Idi Amin. The group took up arms against Uganda's long-serving President, Yoweri Museveni, alleging government persecution of Muslims. From the start the group was out to curb the President's persecution of Muslims. The government of Museveni fought back so hard and defeated the ADF. After its defeat by the Ugandan army in 2001, it relocated to North Kivu province in the DR Congo.

Following a period of low-level activity, the ADF re-emerged in 2014 with a series of attacks on Congolese civilians as well as propagating the Muslim faith. Musa Seka Baluku became leader in 2015 following the arrest of his predecessor Jamil Mukulu. Baluku reportedly first pledged allegiance to IS in 2016. It was however not until April 2019 that IS first acknowledged its activity in the area, when it claimed an attack on army positions near the border with Uganda. This statement marked the

[102] Ibid.

[103] Sunguta West, "The Rise of ADF-NALA in Central Africa and its Connections with al-Shabab". *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol.13, Issue 1(2018). https://www.refworld.org/docid/54b642a14.html. Accessed 5 November 2021.

announcement of IS's "Central Africa Province" (ISCAP), which would later include Mozambique.[104]

It has been known to have an unparalleled reputation of being the bloodiest of the 122 militias that plague the eastern DRC. In 2020 alone it killed an estimated 465 people and almost 200 people have been killed and 40,000 have been displaced since January 2021 following a surge of attacks by the ADF militia in the northeast Democratic Republic of Congo. The United Nations refugee agency reported an "alarming increase" in these attacks.[105]

African News Agency reported that since the start of 2021, many attacks have been blamed on the ADF and they "have killed nearly 200 people as well as injured dozens of others, maimed thousands and displaced an estimated 40,000 people in DRC's Beni Territory in North Kivu province as well as nearby villages in Ituri province,"[106] UNHCR spokesman for the Central African region, Babar Baloch said. "In less than three months, the ADF has allegedly raided 25 villages, set fire to dozens of houses and kidnapped over 70 people,"[107] he told reporters in Geneva. Meanwhile according to the Kivu Security Tracker (KST), an NGO that monitors violence in the DRC's troubled east, the group has killed more than 1,200 civilians in the Beni area alone since 2017.[108] The massacres have become more frequent since the army launched an offensive in October 2019, forcing the ADF to break up into smaller, highly mobile units, say experts. Baloch said the latest surge in attacks appeared to be due to reprisals by armed groups, their search for food and medicine and accusations against communities of sharing information on ADF positions.[109] In April 2021, this group operated near the

[104] Linnete Bahati and Driss El-Bay, "Allied Democratic Forces: The Ugandan rebels working with IS in DR Congo". Accessed 14 June 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57246001.

[105] Democratic Republic of Congo. Accessed 23 May 2021. https://www.africanews.com/2021/03/19/dr-congo-200-killed-and-40-000-displaced-by-adf-militia-un-says/.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

Oicha and Beni regions of DRC and in that attack seven people were killed.[110]

Conclusion

The concept of terrorism has been traced historically to the late nineteenth century during the course of the French Revolution in Europe. "The reign of terror" instituted by Robespierre with the use of the guillotine machine led to the death of many French citizens who were branded as enemies of the French revolutionary ideals. Forward to the twenty-first century, terrorism has taken a new twist since the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York and counterterrorism engagements have further assumed enhanced vigor. Yet, the more the concert of actions by member states of the international community to stamp out terrorism, the more terrorist groups spring out in Africa and other parts of the world. Consequently, acts of terrorism have seemingly become defining features of security analysis and recurrent trend in several parts of Africa today. Virtually no African country can be said to be immune from terrorist threats and vulnerabilities inherent in the continent. Quite recently, with the introduction of the social media encapsulated in internet, mobile telephony, and twitter, there is now an upsurge of networks of terrorist organizations exacerbated with ISIS propaganda. These have called into question newer forms of defining the concept as well as its operations. According to Andrew Cunin, a new paradigm is needed to understand the evolution and development of modern terrorist organizations and help predict what future threats may look like.[111]

The thrust of this chapter therefore focused on terrorism in Central Africa and contends that if governments of this region do not take adequate care in handling the grievances of these groups which they called terrorists, the entire map of Africa might be redrawn in the next decade to accommodate the emergence of new states. This is more so because these groups are gaining grounds despite resistance by the various

[110] Democratic Republic of Congo. Accessed 20 May 2021, https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/471081/drc-suspected-adf-militants-attack-villages-near-oicha-and-beni-april-23-at-least-seven-people-killed.

[111] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism," in *International Security* vol. 27, no. 3 (Winter 2002/03): 31.

national governments. Evidently, terrorism in the region has been fabricated and given meaning by the various governments but that those who orchestrate the so-called terrorism by others are in fact nationalists who want their aspirations to be heard and legitimized. Most of these aspirations fell under the political and religious dynamics with far-reaching consequences on the region. The foregoing analysis further reveals that the emergence of certain terrorist groups is borne out of political and religious grievances.

In conclusion, there exists indications that virtually all the groups branded terrorists are all fighting to gain legitimacy in defense of their particularities in approaches and tactics considered in violation of specific national laws and sometimes in contravention of extant international conventions and protocols. In view of the growing transnational dimensions of the terrorist threats in Africa, the imperative of regional and international counterterrorism cooperation cannot be over-emphasized.

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CHAPTER 3

Understanding Terrorism in Cameroon: Trends and Contexts

Henry Kam Kah

Introduction

Prior to the extension of Boko Haram cross-border attacks from Nigeria to Cameroon in 2013, political instability in the Central African Republic (CAR), and socio-political crises in the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon, there was very little discussion on terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in the country. These two episodes contributed significantly to the debate and discussions about terrorism in Cameroon. This study examines the socio-economic and political bases of terrorist activities, the state definition and use of term, and how these have affected the political stability of Cameroon. Regarding the roots that led to terrorist incursions into Cameroon from the two neighboring countries of CAR and Nigeria and to the Anglophone crisis in the country, it is important to understand them and proffer solutions that may lead to durable peace in

H. K. Kah (✉)
Department of History and African Civilisations, University of Buea, Buea, Cameroon
e-mail: henry.kah@ubuea.cm

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the country in particular and the Central/West African regions and the entire sub-Saharan Africa in general.

Africa is known for the surge in terrorist groups in recent times, many of which are linked to organized terrorist organizations outside the continent such as in the Middle East. Others are homegrown and causing havoc on the population in the areas in which they operate. A varied number of factors are responsible for an increase in terrorist organized and related activities in the continent as elsewhere in the world. These include an increase in population, the development of shanty towns with attendant consequences such as increase in crime, and the partition of Africa which divided people of the same ethnic stock into different countries like the Somalis. Together these forces created and continue to create a number of problems in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Other factors responsible for terrorist upsurge are the promotion of racism and tribalism within democratic pluralistic societies in several African countries. This has generated serious problems and promoted the development and growth of terrorist cells like among the Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda with spillover effects into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In some areas like in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, they have developed a culture of violence and criminality as corollaries to growth in terrorism. Conflicting group and individual interests have also been at the root of terrorist activities across Africa. In Sudan, the pursuit of deliberate policy of Arabization by Sudanese leaders in Khartoum resulted to protracted armed conflicts between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army on the one hand; and also between the Government of Sudan which supported the Arab Janjaweed militias and the black population of the country's Western Region of Darfur as the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) took up arms against the Sudan in a conflict that resulted in the massacre of the non-Arab population in Darfur region for a long period.[1]

Environmental and ecosystem threats such as drought and flooding, have also resulted in conflicts that now explain the "breeding" of terrorist ideas in different parts of Africa. In the Darfur and Niger Delta regions of Sudan and Nigeria respectively, the civil strife there was a result of unsustainable use of the environment. Long stays in power and poor or compromised governance have also been at the bases of terrorist

[1] Robert L. Feldman, "The Root Causes of Terrorism: Why Parts of Africa Might Never be at Peace" *Defense and Security Analysis* 25, 4 (2009): 355–372.

acts across the length and breadth of Africa. Examples abound and include the governance system in Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Uganda, and Angola, who recently renewed its political leadership while some other countries have maintained "sit-tight" leaders or attempted to modify the constitution. This is what led to the ouster of Alpha Conde of Guinea in September 2021. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic have in different ways provided a congenial environment for the proliferation of terrorist groups to oppose the status quo.[2]

The increase in terrorist activities in the Lake Chad Basin area and beyond compelled the Cameroonian government to enact an anti-terrorism law in 2014 with the aim of sanctioning anyone or group of persons caught in acts of terrorism in the country.[3] In spite of the government's enactment of this law, there was a flurry of criticisms from members of the civil society. Some people argued that this law was an infringement on fundamental human rights of Cameroonians and that it promoted dictatorship. Critics also argued that the law might be abusively used to suppress dissent and muzzle the media in Cameroon.[4] In spite of these criticisms against the anti-terrorism law, the government rightly or wrongly argued that it was overwhelmingly received by Cameroonians.[5] Following these negative comments about the law, there is a compelling need for its revision which will ensure the protection of the fundamental rights of the people. This notwithstanding, the increase in terrorist activities in Cameroon during the past decade or so has been blamed on social, economic, and political factors. These forces that drive terrorism are not

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Full Text (English): Law on the Suppression of Acts of Terrorism in Cameroon," https://www.dibussi.com/2014/12/cameroon-terrorism-law.html, retrieved on January 11, 2021.

[4] "Cameroon: New Law on Repression of Terrorism Passed," https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/cameroon-new-law-on-repression-of-terrorism-passed/, retrieved on January 11, 2021.

[5] Eric Che Muma, "The Impact of Anti-Terrorism Laws on Religious Freedom: Cameroon's Approach in Combating Terrorism and the Role of the Church," Proceedings of the Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies Conference, 16–17 October, 2017; Peter Tiako Ngangum, "The 'Trumping Effect' of Anti-Terrorism Legislations: The Case of Cameroon," *CAPITULA* VI, (2017): 96–122; "What President Paul Biya Said…on Boko Haram," In 2nd Regional Summit on Security in Nigeria and the Neighbouring Countries, Abuja 14 May 2016, Special Publication No. 1, 3.

limited to Cameroon. They are also endemic in neighboring Chad, CAR, Nigeria, and the Niger Republic.

Overview of Terrorism in Cameroon

Terrorism is a harsh reality in Cameroon which has manifested itself in different parts of the country especially the East and Far North Regions in different forms. Terrorists tackle the population, their property, state infrastructure, and security forces. They ambush, abduct, rape, organize acts of arson, raid in search of supplies, behead, and organize targeted killing of members of vigilante committees set up through collaboration between local leadership and government officials. Terrorist activities have led to resignation and untold misery among the population. The strategy of suicide bombing, especially by young girls, has been employed by terrorists in the Far North Region to inflict pain on the people.[6] Terrorists have also targeted and destroyed military posts. Their deadly attacks have in some cases been repelled with consequences in material damage and loss of lives. These activities have taken place with terrorists hoping that they would be placated with money to tone down on their violent activities.

Other strategies adopted by terrorists to subjugate and instill fear in the population of Far North and East Regions of Cameroon include seizure of property such as cattle and goats, extortion, and illegal collection of taxes as well as attack on villages. Terrorists like Boko Haram fighters have hoisted their black flag after they overrun communities even if temporarily as the case may be.[7] Hostage-taking or kidnapping for ransom was and remains a preoccupation in the East and especially Far North Region of Cameroon. Through sustained efforts of defense and security forces, this is drastically reducing as noticed in the past three years.[8] Cattle, goats, and foodstuff seized have been traded in Nigerian markets and used for food by insurgents. They run parallel governments in the areas captured through imposition of taxes in money and material items. Those who

[6] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Cameroon," https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/cameroon/, retrieved on February 25, 2021.

[7] Ibid.

[8] "Terrorism Survivor in Cameroon takes Road to Recovery: UN News Special Report," https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1044481, retrieved on February 25, 2021.

default payment have paid dearly. This payment has resulted in flogging and also death. Those who have not been able to bear it have fled to safer areas.

Social Roots of Terrorism in Cameroon

Several social forces have contributed to terrorist activities in Cameroon, one of which is religion. Religious fanaticism led to the spread of terrorist activities from Borno State in North East Nigeria into Cameroon's Far North Region in 2013 and also from the CAR. In spite of religious overzealousness that caused mayhem in northern Cameroon, President Paul Biya painted a picture of a different kind. In his traditional end of year speech to Cameroonians in 2014, he politically downplayed or undermined it. Such posture gave the impression that the Cameroonian government was seemingly still dreaming whether the terrorist threat was real within its territorial boundary or not.

Critics of Cameroon government, especially from among the ranks of a fractured opposition were unhappy with this posture of the President, because of deep-seated grievances against his government. The lackluster attitude of the Cameroon government at the very beginning of terrorist activities in northern Cameroon emboldened Islamists to up their game. The firepower against the ruling elite in Cameroon was stepped up, especially those from the northern part of the country like Amadou Ali, the Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, and Cavaye Yeguie Djibril, Speaker of the National Assembly.

Some religious extremists resolved to intensify the fight as long as the religious grievances were not tackled comprehensively and exhaustively. Insecurity eventually escalated in the Far North Region of Cameroon and beyond.[9] In fact, the expansion in Islamist and/or jihadist influence, essentially an extreme form of Sunni Islam or Salafism, is one of the motivating reasons for Boko Haram adherents to wreak havoc in the northern part of Cameroon, Nigeria, in the Lake Chad Basin, and southern Niger Republic.[10] Religious intolerance and extremism formed the basis of

[9] "What President Paul Biya Said…on Boko Haram," 3.

[10] Viviane E., Foyou, Peter Ngwafu, Maribel Santoyo and Andrea Ortiz, "The Boko Haram Insurgency and its Impact on Border Security, Trade and Economic Collaboration between Nigeria and Cameroon: An Exploratory Study," *African Social Science Review* 9, 1 (2018): 70.

Boko Haram militancy in Northern Nigeria which eventually extended to Cameroon (Abiodun 43) Chad and Niger. Political grievances also contributed to the insurgency with devastating consequences.

The historic and ethnic affiliation of several ethnic groups astride the Cameroon- Nigeria border in the northern part of both countries has contributed to Boko Haram terrorist activities in Cameroon. Northern Cameroon and Nigeria in the period prior to colonial annexation and rule were governed as part of the Sokoto Caliphate and Kanem Bornu Empire. They were thus under the same cultural and religious influence which extended into the period of British administration following British administration of Northern Cameroons as part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria from 1922 to 1961. The phobia for Western education among Boko Haram adherents as sinful and corrupting has its roots in this historical experience and ethnic affiliation.[11] There is also the unrelenting aim of creating an Islamic Caliphate in North East Nigeria that should then cover the Far North Region of Cameroon[12] with the avowed aim of doing away with Western civilization[13] and perhaps recreating the Sokoto Caliphate of old and imposing Sharia Law in the whole of Nigeria.

Boko Haram preaches a radical religious ideology[14] that is not only opposed to other religious persuasions but also punishes even Muslims who do not adhere to the religious practices of this insurgent group. The Catholic Church in the conflict-ridden area of Far North Cameroon has paid a heavy price with several of its catechists, diocesan staff, and Christians murdered in cold blood.[15] This is in keeping with the

[11] "Terrorism and the threat radical Islam poses to Cameroon," https://issafrica.org/amp/iss-today/terrorism-and-the-threat-radical-islam-poses-to-cameroon," retrieved on January 11, 2021.

[12] Edwin Kindzeka Moki, "Cameroon Closes Schools as Boko Haram Suicide Bombings Increase." https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-closes-schools-boko-haram-suicide-bombings-increase, retrieved on January 11, 2021.

[13] Walter Gam Nkwi, "Too Much to Carry: The Perceptions and Ramifications of Boko Haram Activities on Cameroon" *Conflict Studies Quarterly* 5 (2013): 69.

[14] https://eeradicalization.com/state-measures-to-prevent-radicalization-and-violent-extremism-in-the-francophone-space-the-example-of-cameroon/, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[15] "Cameroon the terrorism of Boko Haram is spreading," https://acn-canada.org/cameroon-the-terrorism-of-boko-haram-is-spreading/, retrieved on January 11, 2021.

radical ideology of decimating other religious groups, especially Christian denominations operating in this part of the country. Muslims too are victims of insurgent activities of Boko Haram. Jihadists appeal to them to join them in the Holy War against non-Muslims because they are infidels who should be converted to Islam and be saved. Fanaticism is thus a fundamental motivation for terrorist incursions in northern Cameroon including also the Lake Chad Basin involving Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.[16] It is for this reason that Christian churches and adherents in the Far North Region of Cameroon especially in conflict areas have come under regular attacks by these jihadists. In fact, it is the absence of religious tolerance and meaningful inter-religious dialogue that has led to extremist activities in the northern part of Cameroon like elsewhere with consequences for the rest of the country.

Poverty is also one of the main causes of rising terrorist activities in the northern part of Cameroon. The Far North Region is considered as one of the poorest in Cameroon with over 74% of the population living on less than 1.5 US dollars a day.[17] Many young people living in villages are poor because of the absence of access to education and professional development. Others who fail to win litigation get frustrated and believe that Sharia Law provides a better alternative in dispensing justice. In their misery and frustration, many of them have been lured into accepting money from Boko Haram recruiters to fight. They also use the money to provide basic needs of family members. Still, others, especially children between the ages of 5 and 15, are enticed with financial inducements from their families, or are simply kidnapped or abducted where they serve as cannon fodder. Others are recruited from among prisoners once a prison is attacked and prisoners are freed.[18] A good number of young people

[16] Ebode Joseph Vincent Ntuda, Mark Bolak Funteh, Mbarkoutou Mahamat Henri and Nkalwo Ngoula Joseph Lea, 2017. The Boko Haram Conflict in Cameroon: Why is Peace So Elusive? Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Yaounde, 2017: 8.

[17] "Cameroon: Empowering youth to achieve social cohesion," https://cameroon.unfpa.org/fr/news/cameroon-empowering-youth-achieve-social-cohesion, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[18] Foyou et al., "The Boko Haram Insurgency," 71; "Cameroon the terrorism of Boko Haram is spreading," https://acn-canada.org/cameroon-the-terrorism-of-boko-haram-is-spreading/, retrieved on January 11, 2021.

from the foregoing actually join Boko Haram terrorist group for opportunism.[19] Some of them are literate in Arabic but not French, which is the language of administration and official business. They would not therefore understand why they must learn French before they can be gainfully employed. Even those who study in French are not guaranteed employment in the civil service upon completion of studies. This is partly due to the opaque nature of recruiting civil servants in flagrant disrespect of rules in Cameroon.

In northern Cameroon, the social and financial weight involved in weddings have in one way or another contributed to the rise of terrorism in this part of the country and beyond. It has made young boys enlist in Boko Haram in the hope that they will get married or find a spouse among the women who enroll in the insurgent group. Some are Boko Haram members because they want to get rid of the social constraints that their families and society impose on them.[20] Societal and family pressures in northern Cameroon have thus inadvertently contributed to pushing young boys and girls into joining Boko Haram. It is now a burden to organize a wedding because a young couple is expected to raise enough money to do so. This is a social constraint that many young people cannot cope with. They would easily join forces with Boko Haram insurgents to take cover and fight against rising strangulating socio-cultural practices. Things are compounded by the state's inability to adequately address the needs of young people from existing programs. Inter-generational crises have not been handled tactfully by the state and for this reason, young people have easily been converted into the Boko Haram group that is causing chaos in the northern part of Cameroon and neighboring countries.

Climate change and population growth are also critical drivers of terrorism in Central Africa including Cameroon.[21] The advancing desert from the north, rapid deforestation, and unsustainable management of the environment have created problems of survival. The galloping population of Cameroon which is estimated at about 30 million people today calls for opportunities for a sustainable livelihood but these are hard to

[19] Ntuda Ebode et al., The Boko Haram Conflict in Cameroon, 8.

[20] Ibid.

[21] "Special Representative Stresses Need for New Strategies to Tackle Root Causes of Insurgency, as Security Council Considers Situation in Central Africa," https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13618.doc.htm, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

come by. There are many people without basic artisanal skills, crafts and without adequate education which poses a serious problem. The government can hardly provide for all their basic needs and for this reason, they are easily convinced by radical groups on the promise that their socio-economic plight shall be taken care of if they join these groups. The Far North Region of Cameroon falls within the Sahelian belt of Africa with unique problems such as unreliable rainfall. Farmers who cannot make it because of the challenging climatic situation find solace in joining terrorist groups where there is promise of better care.

The attitude of government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to deliver instead of ending aids has instead fueled terrorist activities in Cameroon and neighboring Lake Chad basin member states.[22] The aid that is provided is not as regular as it should be because of challenges of getting donor assistance. Besides, the lackluster politics involved in the distribution of humanitarian aids and development assistance, make even more vulnerable groups to go without receiving this assistance. Bureaucratic red tapes have also kept aid in place when there are people who badly need it. People in vulnerable and insecure areas have often been kept in camps, such as in the northern and eastern parts of Cameroon, and have been given aid or assistance in the form of food instead of being taught the skills that could equip them for sustainable livelihood. Since this assistance is often not reliable, it creates problems and thus the growth of terrorist cells in Cameroon.

Existing social affinities and incentives among the Kanuri ethnic group in Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad has attracted youths to enlist in Boko Haram.[23] Since these people are the same and speak the same language and cultural affinities, it is therefore easier to talk many of them in the youthful age group to join the insurgent group operating in northern Cameroon. All these have been facilitated by the fact that they share in the same religious persuasion. One would therefore expect to see them come together with ease to fight a common cause, namely, the overthrow of civilian regimes for theocratic states so that this part of the country can be governed through Sharia Law. Apart from the Kanuri,

[22] "Root causes of Boko Haram threat in Lake Chad Basin must be tackled – UN political chief," https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/07/535582-root-causes-boko-haram-threat-lake-chad-basin-must-be-tackled-un-political, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[23] Denis M. Tull, "Cameroon and Boko Haram: Time to Think Beyond Terrorism and Security," *German Institute for International and Security Affairs* 42 (2015): 2.

there are other groups located in Northern Nigeria and Cameroon. These groups include the Hausa and Shuwa Arabs. Boko Haram insurgents have therefore appealed to these groups engaged in trans-border commercial activities to supply basic logistics that sustain acts of terrorism in exchange for protection in vulnerable jurisdictions where national governments are not fully in control.[24]

Cameroon is a heterogeneous society which should be an asset but sadly enough, it is a source of problem for the country's stability. Over the past decades, different groups constituting Cameroon have been drifting apart for a variety of reasons.[25] The growing hate speech and ethnic hatred as presented in the media and encouraged by those in positions of authority are not good signs for enduring stability in the country. These have continuously heated the political landscape and are a breeding ground for the mushrooming of terrorist cells in Cameroon. And as Tull has put it "instrumentalisation of social identities is a common tool of political and social conflict in Cameroon."[26] There is no better way of expressing this. Tull is apt in his analysis of the social and political cleavages in Cameroon. Politicians of the ruling party in the Centre Region openly accused those of the Northern part of the country for supporting Boko Haram. Also, political hawks from the Centre, South, and East Regions have cast aspersions on the Bamileke, a major ethnic group of Cameroon from the West Region. This only points to the polarization of the state to the extent that some people feel excluded from its apparatus. Social concerns notwithstanding, there are also economic considerations that have contributed to the analyses on terrorism in Cameroon.

Economic Considerations

The closure of the border between Cameroon and Nigeria contributed to terrorism and violent extremism in Cameroon. Thousands of young people who were involved in trade across the border made a living out of it, especially so because Nigeria provides a huge market for their goods. The closure of the border therefore made them to either sell these goods

[24] Zina Antimbom, Formbui, "Transnationalisation of Terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin: The Case of Boko Haram" M.Sc. Thesis, PAID-WA Buea, 2016, 2.

[25] Tull, "Cameroon and Boko Haram," 3.

[26] Ibid.

very cheaply in Cameroon or to have them waste in the farms for lack of buyers. They became vulnerable and many of them were unable to meet their family expenses. This is particularly a challenge considering the large nature of families in the northern part of Cameroon. The closure of the border and other restrictions across the Cameroon/Nigeria border has resulted in negative effects on trade and sustainable livelihoods.[27] It is therefore the frustration of having to earn a living from the farm that some young people are made to believe that through Boko Haram they will survive. This radical philosophy is often preached in the mosques. Life is therefore not easy for many families in the Far North Region of Cameroon where the Boko Haram insurgency has been wreaking havoc for several years now.

Unemployment and lack of opportunities for youths have contributed to terrorism in Cameroon in the twenty-first century. Youth unemployment is at a worrisome level not only in Cameroon, but also in the Lake Chad Basin which makes it very easy for their recruitment into the Boko Haram group.[28] Many graduates are jobless and/or underemployed in the informal sector with all the challenges that go with the sector. It is often said that a hungry person is an angry person and would easily fall prey to wrong religious interpretation and become radicalized. Unemployment in Cameroon has therefore exposed many young people to extremist ideologies and the growing terrorist activities and propaganda in the country. This high rate of unemployment is due to the fact that the private sector is still not a great employer of labor as is elsewhere. Everyone looks up to the civil service which explains the buying and selling of entrance exams into professional schools. The many youths who cannot afford this money or become slaves of the local elite, often do not make it into competitive entrance exams. Those who become slaves to influential local elite are compensated with a place in these schools. They

[27] Ibid., 2; "Cameroon: Empowering youth to achieve social cohesion," https://cameroon.unfpa.org/fr/news/cameroon-empowering-youth-achieve-social-cohesion, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[28] Ibid.; "Human Rights Council opens Special Session in light of terrorist attacks and human rights abuses by Boko Haram," https://www.ohchr.org/SP/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=15786&LangID=S, retrieved on January 14, 2021; "Root causes of Boko Haram threat in Lake Chad Basin must be tackled – UN political chief," https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/07/535582-root-causes-boko-haram-threat-lake-chad-basin-must-be-tackled-un-political, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

see their certificates as of no use and so get bitter with the system and all that it represents.

Although Cameroon is extremely rich in natural resources of all kinds, the country has been stagnating with consequences such as terrorist activities within its borders. This has been fueled by an increase in the high rate of poverty with a national rate of 40% in 2015, mass unemployment and underemployment, which was about 69% in 2015. The multiplier effect of all these has been a social explosion in the towns and cities of the country.[29] When people are hungry and when many cannot find work and/or are disappointed with their underemployed status, there is always the tendency for them to look elsewhere for solace and thus their radicalization by terrorist literature and adherents to terrorist activities. This has been the case in Cameroon although many of them are now involved in adding value to their education through self-employment.

The poor nature of infrastructure, absence of roads, and an unreliable energy situation are all economic factors that have promoted the expansion of terrorist networks in Cameroon. There exists a very big gap in these things in the urban and rural areas in the Far North and between the northern part of Cameroon in relation to these facilities. Heavy industries are also near absent in the Far North Region of Cameroon[30] as many rely on agriculture with all the uncertainty this requires. This has led to anger and the feeling of frustrated people who have virtually been abandoned to themselves. When a people are abandoned to themselves, it takes strong willpower to resist all the temptations of the devil and nurse terrorist ideas. Many young people see in it an adventure that can transform their lives for the better although this is illusory.

The fragile socio-economic environment in the Far North Region of Cameroon contributed to the establishment of early terrorist cells in this region in the guise of religious groups.[31] This is a region of climatic challenges which also affects agricultural and livestock activities and explains its volatility to new doctrines or radicalization by Muslim clerics. Industries are nearly absent except for agro-industrial complexes like SODECOTON or the cotton-producing company and SEMRY which produces rice in the major plains of the northern part of

[29] Tull, "Cameroon and Boko Haram," 2.

[30] Ntuda Ebode et al., The Boko Haram Conflict in Cameroon, 11.

[31] Ibid., 8.

Cameroon. The livestock development company SODEPA also promotes livestock development in this part of the country as elsewhere. These are far between and cannot employ the teaming youths in a region with the highest concentration of the population of Cameroon. This has therefore provided a congenial environment for unemployed youths to buy new radical ideas and become terrorists and participate in kidnappings and suicide bombings.

Climate change and all that it represents has dealt a severe blow to the stability of the people. The climate is that of the harsh Sudano-Sahelian which goes with frequent flooding caused by short, sudden, and torrential rainfall mostly in the months of August and November. Rainfall is generally low and drought always leads to the drying up of streams that serve to stabilize the ecosystem. For this reason, crops are destroyed and pastureland is not reliable for grazing. The long-term consequences of all these include inter-community feuds over available but scarce resources, conflicts between fishermen, farmers, and animal breeders.[32] These and other related variables have contributed to the introduction and spread of the extremist Islamic doctrines of Wahhabism and Salafism in Cameroon for political ends.

The deficits of equitable redistribution of wealth in Cameroon constitute another key factor that led to a surge in terrorist activities in the country.[33] In Cameroon, the gap between the very poor and the very rich widens by the day. Through corrupt practices, these rich people are given more and the poor lose what little they had. This has made several people doubt whether some people came to this world only to see off others. The very rich are politicians with an unfettered access to state resources and through influence peddling, they acquire wealth unscrupulously and with such arrogance that this has angered a cross section of youths. They are unable to understand why they will go through training but wealth continues to circulate in the hands of a few individuals. Such privileged individuals feel that these discontented people are not patriotic and should be silenced if they rise up in protest. This has often led to the emergence of dissident and reactionary groups like Boko Haram

[32] Ibid., 11–12.

[33] Isaac Tamba, "An Economic Analysis of Boko Haram's Activities in the Chad-Cameroon –Nigeria Border Area" *Journal of Economics and Financial Studies* 3, 1 (2015): 24.

as captured by Tamba.[34] Apart from these economic considerations, the political motivations have also been at the basis of terrorist activities in Cameroon.

Political Motivations

In northern Cameroon like elsewhere in Africa, demand for the implementation of Sharia Law, devoid of Western influences and ideologies, has been a social but more importantly political weapon that has contributed to terrorist incursions into the country from neighboring Nigeria.[35] Young people including minors have been intoxicated with this kind of ideological discourse and money to adhere to the preaching of Boko Haram.[36] Many are those among Muslims who think that the laws of Cameroon are discriminatory and fraught with corrupt practices. They argue that where there is injustice peace can never be achieved. This group of people therefore want a state of law whereby Sharia Law will regulate every human activity and thus bring about equality and societal stability. This has remained one of the preoccupations of insurgents who think that if not for the whole country, Sharia Law must be put into practice in the Muslim north of the country.

Hate speech and intolerance to the existence of other religions have contributed to the surge in terrorist activities in Cameroon.[37] Hate speech though condemned in government circles has been promoted by the governing class as a divide and rule tactic to govern and hold people ransom. This has contributed to exclusion in state institutions and the consequences thereof in terms of unemployment and redistribution of the country's wealth. Religious intolerance has also been condoned by the state which has increased tension between religious and other groups. It is only through a serious crackdown of those who promote these vices through a political decision that peace can return and the terrorist

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ramdeen, Marisha Ramdeen, "Conflict Trends 2017/2: Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa." https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/countering-terrorism-violent-extremism-africa/, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[36] "Cameroon: Empowering youth to achieve social cohesion," https://cameroon.unfpa.org/fr/news/cameroon-empowering-youth-achieve-social-cohesion, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[37] Ibid.

will no longer be tagged with such descriptions as not patriotic and self-destructive.

The observed delays and sometimes inability of the government to quickly address the legitimate aspirations of the population further serve as another political motivation for terrorism. Such inactions on the part of some local authorities have contributed to the rise of terrorism in Cameroon. Many local officials took grievances of the population for granted and sometimes consider such as coming from misguided and/or tele-guided elements.[38] As these grievances grew and confidential reports were given about the state of affairs, these officials were more concerned with what to gain from the local population than to address their pressing concerns. By the time they rose to action, it was already too late, considering that many citizens had been made to understand that their lives would be better if there was a change of regime or if their own ideology was bought over or adhered to by many. Some of these local authorities have continued to give the impression that all is well when it is clear that Cameroon once a haven of peace and stability in Central Africa is now at war not only with itself but also with neighbors who also have within their territorial confines some of these terrorist groups with support from the Middle East and North Africa.

Human rights abuses and the over-centralization of administration in Yaounde have been at the center of the rise in terrorism in Cameroon in the twenty-first century. The Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) François Louncény Fall in one of his outings pointed to grave human rights abuses in Cameroon and the delay in accelerating decentralization as causes of terrorism in the country.[39] In the North West and South West Regions, where separatists are fighting for secession and a restoration of the statehood of Southern Cameroons which existed prior to reunification on October 1, 1961, there are serious human rights violations including kidnappings, killings, destruction of homes, harassment, and rape among other vices which have radicalized young people

[38] "Human Rights Council opens Special Session in light of terrorist attacks and human rights abuses by Boko Haram," https://www.ohchr.org/SP/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=15786&LangID=S, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

[39] "Special Representative Stresses Need for New Strategies to Tackle Root Causes of Insurgency, as Security Council Considers Situation in Central Africa," https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13618.doc.htm, retrieved on January 14, 2021.

and embittered the population. If this trend continues, the security situation in these two regions will spiral into an uncontrollable level. As things stand, it is already so precarious and the population is paying the heavy price. For many years, power has been centralized in Yaounde, the administrative headquarters of the country. This bureaucracy has slowed down government business and encouraged corruption and extortion of money in the name of rendering service to the population. Such has contributed to promoting terrorist activities in Cameroon. Recent efforts to fast track the decentralization process have been received with mixed feelings without the clear absence of political will.

Furthermore, the political crisis in the CAR which escalated to an uncontrollable level with the overthrow of President Francois Bozizé in 2013 after ten years in office has had repercussions on the security situation in eastern Cameroon.[40] There are frequent terrorist incursions into the region from the excesses of armed groups fighting to overthrow the current regime of Archange Faustin Touadera. This is an additional burden to the country's security forces fighting a war at several fronts including the North, North West, and South West regions embroiled in a socio-political crisis that is getting even more complex by the day. The influx of refugees from the CAR and the dire security challenges this poses is an additional burden to the already over-stretched security forces of Cameroon. It is therefore in the interest of Cameroon for peace to return to the CAR failing which terrorist activities will continue to disturb the peace of the people in the East and North Regions of Cameroon and by extension, the whole country.

Some Cameroonians joined Boko Haram under duress or mere opportunism.[41] This was a situation that made it difficult for young people to resist. For those who joined it because of opportunism, little did they know that it would not be a short but rather long and tortuous journey against regular forces not only in Cameroon but also from other neighboring and supporting countries like Niger, Chad, Nigeria, and Benin.

[40] "Terrorism and the threat radical Islam poses to Cameroon," https://issafrica.org/amp/iss-today/terrorism-and-the-threat-radical-islam-poses-to-cameroon," retrieved on January 11, 2021.

[41] "Cameroon's Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram," https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/263-extreme-nord-du-cameroun-nouveau-chapitre-dans-la-lutte-contre-boko-haram, retrieved on January 11, 2021.

Boko Haram has continued to operate thanks to the constant recruitment of young people through duress. The many who cannot resist it find themselves among the ranks of the Boko Haram leaders where they are trained for combat and for suicide bombings in strategic targets leading to the loss of many lives. Opportunism is borne out of the need to exploit an opportunity which ends off rather exploiting the one who thought he or she would have made capital out of a chaotic situation.

Still, politically speaking, corruption, and failure to uphold the rule of law have remained endemic in Cameroon's public sector. This has become one of the political considerations for activities of terrorist groups in Cameroon. The reason is that the regime has tried to manipulate the population, rule through intimidation tactics, co-opt opponents to give a semblance of democracy, and claim political legitimacy and stability. The signals to pen up anger against the regime were mass mobilization or violent protests of 2008 across the length and breadth of Cameroon.[42] When the term limits to a presidential mandate were scrapped in favor of President Biya to continue to stand for re-election, this only got a cross section of the population furious with his seat-tight attitude on the realm of state affairs. The 2008 riots and removal of term limits were unsettling episodes in the history of terrorist crystallization within the borders of Cameroon which the Yaounde authorities seemed to have ignored or simply thrown away with a wave of the hand. Today, terrorists are everywhere terrorizing not only the population but also more importantly security forces and top government officials who can no longer travel as freely as they used to.

The political history of Cameroon, from the sudden resignation of Ahmadou Ahidjo in November 1982, through the *coup d'état* of April 6, 1984, economic recession of the 1980s, political liberalization of the country, rebirth of Anglophone nationalism, protests across the country and state-sponsored brutality[43] created intense ill-feeling among a cross section of the population, especially from the northern part of the country. When Ahidjo resigned in 1982, it did not take long for Cameroon to be mired in an abortive coup with serious repercussions for ethno-regional co-existence. Many people were killed, especially those

[42] Tull, "Cameroon and Boko Haram," 2.

[43] Michel Kpughe Lang, "Christian Churches and the Boko Haram Insurgency in Cameroon: Dilemmas and Responses." *Religions* 8, 143 (2017): 3.

who took part in the coup who were mostly from northern Cameroon. As if that was not enough, the economic malaise of the 1980s affected the economic performance of Cameroon like other African countries. Many farmers and civil servants paid the price as Cameroon devalued its currency twice within a very short period of time. This coincided with the liberalization of political space in the country where parties were formed to defend regional and ethnic interests. Anglophones also seized this opportunity to put forth several demands on the reform of the state. Liberalization and other demands overwhelmed the government including contested elections and state-sponsored brutality became a *modus operandi* of the government. All these happenings provided a congenial atmosphere for the rise of terrorism in Cameroon. A country that was known for peace in the Central African sub-region now talks of war and several terrorist incursions with consequences for the population.

The sky-rocketing population of the Far North Region, which is far removed from the center of power in Yaoundé has provided terrorist groups the opportunity to recruit many from among it. In spite of this population density, the Cameroonian government has not paid enough attention to this and taken adequate measures to provide the people and others with opportunities for sustainable livelihood. This has made the people socio-economically disconnected from the rest of the country. Data from the National Statistics Institute indicates that more than 70% of the people live below the poverty line. Besides, over 50 to 70% of children in this part of the country are chronically malnourished.[44] All these have provided a fertile ground for the growth of terrorist cells with the assistance of itinerant preachers and other Muslim clerics. Until the situation is drastically redressed, it will be difficult for one to talk all the fighters out of the bush in the foreseeable future.

In the Far North Region is a cross-border where trans-border crime is rife. It is in fact, a region of instability by virtue of its geographical location and by the fact that the state has on several occasions used its coercive power, which has only compounded problems of the people. Added problems of the area include organized smuggling of fuel, medications, auto spare parts, and drugs. Small arms freely circulate this area from Chad, Sudan, and the CAR.[45] Such nefarious cross-border activities have made

[44] Ntuda Ebode et al., The Boko Haram Conflict in Cameroon, 10–11.

[45] Ibid., 11.

it possible for people of this region to think that the central government has little that they can offer as a solution. The state apparatus instead of creating more opportunities for the population decides to confront it with prior knowledge. There has however been an official response to terrorist activities.

Official Response to Terrorist Activities

The government of Cameroon has responded to terrorist incursions in Cameroon in various ways. One of these has been through militarizing the Far North region of the country where Boko Haram has continued to menace the population and disrupt government services. The military option has been considered as one of the most important official ways through which the Cameroon government has and continues to respond to terrorist threats. The elite unit of the military known as the *Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide* (BIR) or the Rapid Intervention Battalion has been at the forefront of this response with noticeable short-term successes. Apart from the over 2000 BIR troop deployment throughout the Far North, there are also units of the regular army sent to protect the borders and the main road axis of this region of Cameroon. The police and gendarmerie have also been deployed in the Far North Region to help bring the volatile situation under control and this is in the form of search and seizure patrols.[46] The heavy military response has led to instances of human rights abuse which has estranged the local population from the military operating in the area. This calls for a rethinking of the civilian-military relations and for the Cameroon government to address the fundamental socio-economic and political problems of the people and some of the grievances pushing them into fighting against it.

In addition, the government has also reacted by closing border crossings and concentrated displaced persons in and around urban centers for better protection.[47] Cameroon shares a long border with Nigeria to the West and this has posed a serious challenge to the people. In order to carefully control the area, the Cameroon government closed borders so that adherents to Boko Haram will not be able to find any safe haven for

[46] Edward B. Radley, Cameroon's Far North: Responding to Boko Haram. Oxford Research Briefing – March 2017, 2.

[47] Ibid., 1.

themselves. The military permanently patrols these closed borders which have from time to time been opened owing to the necessity to do so.

Other ways through which the government has responded was to announce a $2.5 million project meant to benefit youths of the areas most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. This Youth and Stabilization for Peace and Security project in the Far North Region envisions the promotion of tolerance, co-existence, and is also aimed at financing trainings and the establishment of income generating activities for over 30,000 youths between the ages of 12 and 25 from six municipalities most affected by the security crisis in that region. Technical and financial assistance for this project is from the European Union (EU) and the United Nations.[48] This is a lofty government action if well followed will provide employment to many youths with the trickle-down effect on many other young people and thus fight against youth radicalization in this part of the country. The fear is however that gullible politicians and administrative officials charged with the success of the project might swindle the money into their private bank accounts thereby only making young people to remain poor and vulnerable to all kinds of doctrines. There is also the fear that once the EU and UN withdraw financial support the program might collapse for lack of adequate funding.

The government also made available to the vigilante committees some financial and material support which would enable them to effectively engage in the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. It contributed to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) troops, including providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance flights by two US-donated C-208 Cessnas.[49] It is also a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership which aims at a coordinated effort to stamp out terrorism from Africa.[50] The project for young people was intended to dissuade them from being radicalized to the extent of joining terrorist cells operating in different parts of the Far North Region of Cameroon. The local vigilante groups were thought by the Cameroon government to play a very important role in tracking down terrorists and protecting their communities from destruction by them. They have so

[48] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Cameroon," https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/cameroon/, retrieved on February 25, 2021.

[49] Ibid.

[50] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 – Cameroon," https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1fb1a.html, retrieved on February 25, 2021.

far done a commendable job and many have in trying to protect their communities paid with their lives. Continuous collaboration between government forces and these groups can lead to very positive results but the post-crisis period might pose a problem if these vigilantes are not carefully handled and integrated into the security network of the country.

Cameroon was engaged in the persecution of numerous Boko Haram-affiliated defendants for terrorism-related crimes, primarily in the military tribunal in Maroua in 2019. Most of these trials as was observed by the US Embassy in February were related to those who were alleged to have provided logistical support to this terrorist group and not actual fighters. The low conviction rate is due in large part to poor charging decisions by prosecutors at the outset of cases and to subsequent lack of credible evidence to support convictions at trial. There was often a lack of trial evidence due to the fact that live witnesses were absent to provide testimony in court. This is not required under Cameroonian law but is increasingly expected by judges who decide or rule on cases.[51] The manner in which these judgments have been carried out on the people involved, many of whom are not combatants, has aroused bitterness among the local population.

The government has continued to use the 2014 anti-terrorism law to suppress dissent and freedom of expression in the country in various ways. According to this law, there is a death penalty for citizens who, either as individuals or in a group, carry out, abet, or sponsor terrorism.[52] Several journalists and activists have been arrested by security forces and the Government of Cameroon continues to describe those fighting for the actualization of an independent State of Ambazonia for the Anglophone population, comprising of North West and South West regions as terrorists. Some of their leaders including the self-proclaimed President of Ambazonia Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe are incarcerated in the Kondengui maximum security prison in Yaounde where they were judged and slammed with life imprisonment sentences.[53] This has only emboldened the Amba boys as the separatist fighters are known to step up the

[51] Ibid.

[52] "Cameroon: New Law on Repression of Terrorism Passed," https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/cameroon-new-law-on-repression-of-terrorism-passed/, retrieved on February 25, 2021.

[53] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 – Cameroon," https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1fb1a.html, retrieved on February 25, 2021.

fight against security forces and the civilian collaborators which has met with equal firepower from government forces.

Conclusion

Cameroon is apparently endowed by underlying socio-economic and political factors as clearly demonstrated in the foregoing analysis that provide fertile ground for terrorism to strive in the country. Terrorist groups in Cameroon have connections with larger global terrorism groups and diaspora funding that pose challenges to domestic and regional counterterrorism responses. At the basis of all these terrorist activities are socio-cultural, economic, and political motivations. As long as these motivations are not adequately addressed for durable peace to reign, Africa will remain a continent of growing terrorist activities and political destabilization.

The social issues which are at the center of growing terrorist cells in Cameroon were highlighted. Among these social issues are religious fanaticism, ethnic affiliation of the Kanuri and other ethnic groups across the border with the CAR, Chad, and Nigeria, poverty and the heterogeneous nature of the Cameroonian society. Poverty drove many of the boys into joining terrorist groups in order to address pressing family problems. It was the religious overzealousness that made many staunch adherents of Islam join terrorist networks in defense of the values of this religion. Today, many are still fighting in the pious hope that God or Allah will create for them a state different from the present states of Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. The heterogeneity of Cameroon should not have been a problem except that desperate anti-state elements and political bigots have generated hate speech along the country's diversity that fuels the centrifugal tensions among the population.

After an examination of the social issues, the economic motivations of the terrorist activities in Cameroon are discussed. Among them are border closure between Nigeria and Cameroon and unemployment. Other economic issues that have spurred terrorist activities in Cameroon are poor infrastructure, climate change, and the unequal nature of wealth redistribution in the country. Nigeria is a big neighbor of Cameroon and provides a lot of trading opportunities for citizens of both countries. The closure of the border, which is a big business activity, has led to frustration on the part of many young people. It was through cross-border trade that many families made a living but the closure of the border caused pain

to many who through frustration would accept anything to join groups that fight against the state. Unemployment and underemployment are endemic in Cameroon because many people look up to the government to create jobs and/or the enabling environment for the private sector to thrive but the Government of Cameroon has been unable to succeed in this regard. These are things with a psychological impact on the local population. The nature of infrastructure has generally slowed economic activities and people become vulnerable to any foreign doctrine that can destabilize the country. Other economic activities have played a part in the terrorist incursions into Cameroon from neighboring countries, notably Nigeria.

In the political realm, we have discussed the egotistical nature of the elite who are more interested in maintaining their positions as opposed to the quest for the collective good. They have created what one might refer to as the political ethnic group made up of a tiny minority of self-seeking individuals from all the ten regions of the country. This has often led to frustration and anger on the faces of young people who have gone through such experiences of frustrations and relative deprivations. The political evolution of the history of Cameroon has also led to nostalgic feelings of the past as compared to what obtains now. Corruption is rife in Cameroon in both the public and private sectors. This vice constitutes a canker worm which has made many young boys and girls unemployed and underemployed. These kinds of grievances make the youth population angry with the state of affairs and to try to provide an alternative in the form of this by engaging in terrorist activities. On the whole, therefore, we have clearly discussed the different forces that have affected the stability of Cameroon through terrorist activities.

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United States Department of State, (2019). "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Cameroon," https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/cameroon/ (accessed February 25, 2021).

CHAPTER 4

State and the Terrorist Threats in Chad

Obinna Ukaeje

Introduction

The Republic of Chad is a landlocked country in north-central Africa with a population of about 16.5 million people.[1] It is the fifth largest country in Africa and ranks second among countries of the Sahel region after Sudan. It is bordered to the north by Libya, to the east by Sudan, to the south by the Central African Republic, to the southwest by Cameroon and Nigeria, and to the west by Niger. Chad also shares maritime borders in the southwest with Nigeria and Cameroon and on the Lake Chad Basin. Chad's territory stretches across three regions; from the Sahel through Sudanian savanna, to the sub-Saharan region, and is neighbour to six African countries with a history of terrorism—Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger.

[1] "The Current Population of Chad", *World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision*. www.worldometers.info/worldpopulation/chad-population (Accessed 28 August 2020).

O. Ukaeje (✉)
Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: obinnaukaeje@yahoo.com; oukaeje@ndc.gov.ng

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Since 2004, Chad has had experience with terrorist infiltration by Islamic fundamentalist groups. First, it was the Islamic fundamentalist group known as the Algerian Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), whose fighters were repelled by the Chadian military on the Libyan border in March 2004.[2] The seriousness of the Boko Haram threats in Chad became glaring following audacious attacks in 2015 and subsequently changed the security landscape of Chad.

Over a span of three days immediately before and after Ramadan, Boko Haram struck Chad's capital N'Djamena four times. These attacks came to be known as the N'Djamena bombings. Three suicide attacks against two police targets killed 33 people on 15 June, five policemen and six terrorists were killed during a police raid on 27 June, and a suicide bomber killed 15 in N'Djamena main market on 11 July.[3] On 10 October same year, 36 individuals were killed and more than 50 wounded in a suicide attack by Boko Haram in the town of Baga Sola, a small fishing community on Lake Chad.[4] However, these attacks were countered by the Chadian military in collaboration with Nigerian military that chased the terrorists into Nigeria. The counter was successful owing to the combined efforts of the MNJTF which has considerably contributed to the degrading of Boko Haram's territorial gains in Chad. However, a failure on the part of the combined security services to hold territory and weed out Boko Haram led to the resurgence of the terrorist group. Despite the counter terrorist efforts of Chad both unilaterally and multilaterally in collaboration with the MNJTF and other international collaborators, the Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group, Boko Haram has continued to make impact in Chadian territory with several accompanying retaliatory attacks unleashed on Chadian territory after every successful onslaught on the group's members.

[2] Emily Hunt, "Al Qaeda's North African Franchise: The GSPC Regional Threat", *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch 1034.* P. 1–5. 28 September, 2005. https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/alqaedas-north-african-franchise-gspc-regional-threat/html. (Accessed 18 October 2021).

[3] "Chad Troops Seize Nigerian Town of Dikwa from Boko Haram", *Reuters, India*, 2 March, 2015. https://in.reuters.com/article/nigeria-violence-chad/chad-troops-seize-nigerian-townofDikwa. (Accessed 28 August, 2020).

[4] "At least 36 Killed in Suicide Bombings on Market and Refugee camp in Chad", *The Guardian*, 10 October, 2015. https://theguardian.com/orld/2015/oct/10/suicide-bombings/baga-sola/html. (8 September 2020).

The continued resurgence of the group and the accompanying retaliatory attacks on the soil of Chad has raised security concerns about the enduring capacity of the group to execute large-scale assaults, and the effectiveness of Chadian military and the Lake Chad Basin states' responses to eradicate Boko Haram in the region. In the light of the above, this paper examines the scourge of terrorism in Chad with emphasis on the nature and dynamics, as well as official responses at national level and within the framework of international cooperation, with a view to making counterterrorism recommendations that will see to the eradication of terrorism in Chad and the Lake Chad Basin region.

Overview of Terrorism in Chad

The emergence of terrorism in Chad could be traced to the rise of terrorist groups in the Sahel region in the late 1990s, which resulted from the expansionist spill-over effects from terrorist organisations operating in North Africa and the Maghreb. These terrorist organisations include the Algerian Salafi-jihadist militant organisation, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and the splinter group al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[5] Incidentally, the porous nature of the Sahel region's borders, the region's religious affiliation with Islam in the Maghreb, as well as poor governance, political instability, and poverty that characterised the region created a safe haven for the terrorist organisations to operationalise their ideology and desire for expansion.

To achieve their expansionist agenda and operational mandates, these terrorist organisations were fragmented into several groups with extremist beliefs and an agenda for easy infiltration and operationalization in different countries within the Sahel and beyond. These groups include al-Qaeda affiliated groups such as AQIM, Macina Liberation Front (MLF), Ansarul Dine and Al-Mourabitoun operating under the name Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Boko Haram, and Ansarul Islam.[6] And Groups affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) such as the

[5] William Thornberry and Jaclyn Levy, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb", *AQAM Futures Project Case Study Series*, Case Study Number 4 September, 2011. https://www.csis.org/analysis/alqaeda-islamic-maghreb (Accessed 8 September 2020).

[6] Marisha Ramdeen, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa", *Conflict Trends (2)*, 2017. https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/countering-terrorism-violent-extreme-africa/html. (Accessed 22 September 2020).

Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) which have taken over the Sahel, particularly in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Mali, and Burkina Faso and created a safe haven for some of the world's deadliest terrorist groups in recent times. The implications have been disastrous for the region, as their operations are targeted towards subversion of legitimate governments in the region, forceful taking of territories for the operations, and protracted atrocities committed against unarmed civilians, security forces, and governmental institutions.[7] Tens of thousands of people have been killed in several attacks by these terrorist groups, and millions have been displaced within and across national borders.[8] They have also perverted insecurity across countries within the region. Chad has been one of the major victims of their terrorism in the Sahel.

Chad geo-strategic location in the Sahel provides the needed safe environment for terrorist operations. Moreover, since their operationalization in the area, the government of Chad never worried about them until 2015, when it became obvious that the existence of Boko Haram in the region posed a serious threat to Chadian trade relations with neighbouring countries of Cameroon and Nigeria. Chad's first confrontation with terrorism however was in 2004 against the Algerian GSPC that came to camp in Chad. The Chadian military engaged them in a serious battle that led to the dismantling of the remnants of the Algerian GSPC that came to camp in Chad in 1998 as a result of the Algerian civil war.[9] The Chadian army intercepted GSPC members in the northern Tibesti region, near the border with Libya, and engaged them in combat that repelled them across the borders of Chad. The GSPC lost 43 operators in the battle.[10] However, subsequent terrorism in Chad started with the attack by Boko Haram in 2015.

[7] Wolfram Lacher, "Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region", *The Carnegie Papers*, New York, September 2012.

[8] Harmon Stephen, *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel region: corruption, contraband, Jihad and Mali War of 2012–2013*. Routledge, 2016.

[9] "Islamic Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?" *International Crisis Group Report 92*, March 2005.

[10] Ibid.

Active Terrorist Groups and Their Activities in Chad

The Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Ladda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JASDJ), otherwise known as Boko Haram, is the most active terrorist organisation in Chad, ISWAP maintains a presence, predominantly in the Lake Chad area.[11] Boko Haram is an Islamist terrorist group founded by the late Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno state, Nigeria. The group aspires to destabilise the Nigerian government, remove Western influence from the country, and establish a Sharia state in Nigeria and the entire West Africa region. The group's operations cross the Lake Chad Basin countries; Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Though the group was not so violent under the leadership of its founding leader, Mohammed Yususf, but it became vicious after the death of Mohammed Yusuf on 30 July 2009 with the emergence of Abu Mohammed Abubakar bin Mohammed al-Sheikawi popularly known as Abubakar Shekau.

It is remarkable to note that Boko Haram was initially linked to Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb. However, in an attempt to improve their international standing among other Jihadists, the group tacitly aligned itself with IS in March 2015, thereby forming an operational alliance with Islamic State in West African Province. ISWAP is an IS affiliate in the Sahel-Sahara region which targets the Nigerian government, Christians, and Western interests.[12] While Abubakar Shekau is the leader of Boko Haram, ISWAP is under the command of Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the son of the founder of Boko Haram, late Mohammed Yusuf. Al-Barnawi was the former spokesman of Boko Haram before heading ISWAP after their alliance. In August 2016, the group split into two factions: ISWAP and Boko Haram.[13] Collaboratively, both terrorist organisations are actively operating in the Lake Chad Basin.

[11] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Chad", *Bureau of Counterterrorism, US Department of States*, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/chad/html. (Accessed 16 February 2021).

[12] Terrorism: Chad Travel Advice", https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/chad/terrorism/html. (Accessed 15 February 2021).

[13] Ibid.

Activities of the Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province within Chad

For many years, the activities of Boko Haram were mainly concentrated in Nigeria, particularly in Borno state, which is the group's historical stronghold. However, in the aftermath of the July 2009 revolt against the government of Nigeria and the security forces, many members of Boko Haram were alleged to have fled to North Africa to train with AQIM.[14] Their aim was first to seek refuge after the destruction of their enclaves by the Nigerian security forces during a battle that led to the arrest and eventual death of their leader and founder Mohammed Yusuf. The second aim was to reinforce the group by seeking alliances outside Nigeria with other international terrorist organisations operating in the Sahel, and spread its activities across the States of West Africa and the Sahel.

Reportedly, in 2013 a large contingent of Boko Haram fighters joined an AQIM training centre in Timbuktu, Mali, to learn how to repair Kalashnikovs and launch shoulder-fired weapons.[15] In addition, intelligence reports obtained by Nigeria indicated that Boko Haram ran an international network of recruitment, training, and indoctrination camps in neighbouring countries around Nigeria. These include Gao and Kidal areas in Mali; the Diffa, Maradi, and Maina Soro areas in Niger Republic; the Maroua and Daroua areas of Cameroon; the Zango and Ridina quarters in N'Djamena, Chad; the Ranky Kotsy area in Sudan; and also some cells in the Central African Republic.[16]

As part of their terrorist activities, they were engaged in cross-border assaults on neighbouring states of Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. The first cross-border assault was recorded on 19 February 2013, with the kidnapping of seven members of the Tanguy Moulin-Fournier family in Dabanga, northern Cameroon. This was followed by the 4 April 2014 kidnapping of two Italian priests and a Canadian nun from the small parish of Tchere, and the 17 May 2014 killing of a Cameroon soldier and abduction of 10 Chinese construction company workers from the town of Waza. Ten vehicles belonging to a Chinese company were also

[14] Freedom C. Onuoha, "A Danger not to Nigeria Alone: Boko Haram's Transnational Reach and Regional Responses", *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, Number 2014.

[15] Ibid.

[16] President Goodluck Jonathan, "The World Must Unite to Fight Boko Haram". *Newswatch*, June 2014. P.18.

taken in the attack.[17] Beyond the assaults on civilians and soft targets, the group increased its attack on military positions across the states of the region, thus making the group a regional threat to the entire Lake Chad region.[18]

In January 2015, there was a violent Boko Haram attack on Baga Kawa which surprised many. The Boko Haram fighters burned the town as well as 16 surrounding villages of agriculturists and fishermen.[19] It was reported by Western media outlets that there were 2,000 victims, but no official count verifies this figure. The attack began on January 3, when Boko Haram overran a military base that was the headquarters of the MNJTF, containing troops from Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The terrorists then forced thousands of locals out of the region, and committed mass killings that lasted until 7 January 2015. Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the group claimed responsibility for the massacre in a video statement, saying that the attacks were not many and that the people of Chad should expect more attacks.[20] Shekau further expressed contempt for the presidents of Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, goading Chad's president, Idriss Deby with the message: 'African Kings… I challenged you to attack me now. I am ready'.[21]

The enormity of the attacks and the statement credited to Shekau infuriated President Idris Derby. Chadian troops therefore responded to Boko Haram provocations on the opposite bank of the Chari River in Kousseri through a retaliatory onslaught that cleared the route from Maiduguri to the Chad's capital city of N'Djamena in a manner that addressed the disturbing condition of the trading community in N'Djamena which had

[17] Ibid.

[18] "Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures", *International Crisis Group Report*, 246: 8 March 2017. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/chad/26-fighting-boko-haram-chad-beyond-military-measures. (Accessed 18 August 2020).

[19] "Nigeria: Massive Destruction, Deaths from Military Raid", *Human Rights Watch*. www.hrworg/news/2015/05/01. (Accessed 14 February 2021).

[20] "Boko Haram Claims Baga Massacre and Threatens Nigeria's neighbours". *The Guardian*.22 January 2015. (Accessed 14 February 2021).

[21] Derby Biya and Issoufou, "Boko Haram: Shekau Menace". *Jeune Africa*, 21 January 2015.

been won over by fundamentalism.[22] However, his greatest motivation for taking action stemmed from Boko Haram's threat to Lake Chad, the country's most revered resource region.[23]

Despite President Idris Derby's military onslaught on Boko Haram, to clear them away from Lake Chad, on 21 February 2015, the terrorists launched an attack on the village of Ngouboua on Lake Chad and killed two soldiers. The attack marked the first Boko Haram attack on Chadian territory.[24] Subsequently, it was followed by a series of bombings in N'Djamena between June and July 2015, known as the 'N'Djamena bombings'. It was a devastating chain of attacks that were responsible for many casualties including members of Boko Haram. The series of bombings included: the 15 June 2015 attack that killed at least 27 and injured over 100 following a number of explosions in central N'Djamena; the 29 June 2015 suicide bombing in the northeast Diguel district of N'Djamena which caused 11 fatalities; and the 11 July 2015 suicide bomb attack at N'Djamena's main market (Grand Marche), killing 15 people.[25]

After the N'Djamena bombings in 2015, Boko Haram's presence in Chad shifted to Lake Chad, which lies primarily within Chadian territory. The area combines rich agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing, and is a magnet for migrants from all over the Sahel, leading to tensions over control of resources. With Boko Haram's strong presence around the area, its members embarked on all sorts of criminal activities such as banditry, kidnapping of women and children for suicide attacks, attacks on military installations for resupply of weapons, kidnapping for ransom and trafficking of arms, to finance their operations. These have persisted across the Lake Chad Basin, and assaults on military positions intensified across the region.[26]

[22] Christian Seignobos, "Boko Haram and Lake Chad: An Extension or a Sanctuary", *Afrique Contemporaine, Volume 255, Issue 3*, 2015, pp. 89–114. https://www.cairn-int_info/article-EAFCO2550093-boko-haram-and-lake-chad.html. (Accessed 22 February 2021).

[23] Ibid.

[24] "Nigeria's Boko Haram Militants Attack Chad for First Time". *BBC*. 13 February, 2015. (Accessed 15 February 2021).

[25] Remadji Hoinathy, "Is Counter-Terrorism History Repeating Itself in Lake Chad Basin?" *Institute for Security Studies*, 15 April, 2020.

[26] Ibid.

In addition, Boko Haram's strong affiliation with international terrorist cells in the Sahel such as AQIM and ISWAP provided the needed impetus to sustain their battle against Chadian military forces and the MNJTF in the region. Several studies such as the UN Assessment Report of 2012[27] and Institute for Security Studies' report in 2020[28] have reported that the armoury of the late Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi—one of the biggest armouries in Africa which was opened and looted in 2011 by rebel forces and mercenaries—found its way into the hands of terrorist groups like AQIM that have strong links with Boko Haram.[29] Reportedly, terrorist groups like AQIM acquired heavy weapons such as the surface to air missile, the SAM-7, and anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles, transporting them back to the Sahel region.[30] These arms have been transferred to groups like Ansaru Dine, ISWAP, and Boko Haram, emboldening and enabling them to mount deadlier and audacious attacks in the Lake Chad region.[31]

In September 2015, many Lake Chad Islanders were abducted in Litri and Kaoudjiram.[32] In October 2015, army positions in Boma and Baga Sola were attacked, killing over 100 civilians and approximately 100 Chadian soldiers. Although these attacks were not without retaliatory onslaught by Chadian security forces in concert with the MNJTF, Boko Haram's alliances AQIM and ISWAP helped the group to intensify its attacks in a more sophisticated and better-equipped manner, as well

[27] UN Assessment Report on the Impact of the Libyan Civil War on Countries of the Sahel Region that Straddle the Sahara including Nigeria, Niger and Chad, 2012. *In Reuters*, 26 January 2012, https://www.rueters.com/article/us-libya-un-arms-idUTRE80P1QS20120126. (Accessed 16 February 2021).

[28] "Where Do Sahel Terrorists Get their Heavy Weapons?" *Institute for Security Studies (ISS)*, 12 February, 2020. https://issafrica.org/iss-today/where-do-sahel-terrorists-get-their-heavy-weapons/html. (Accessed 16 February 2021).

[29] Freedom Onuoha, "Porous Borders and Boko Haram's Arms Smuggling Operations in Nigeria." *Al Jazeera Centre for Studies*, Volume 8, 8 September 2013, https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2013/09/201398104245877469/html. (Accessed 14 August 2020); Osimen Goddy, Anegbode John, Akande Clement & Oyewole Oyindamola, "The Borderless-Border and International Security Challenges in Nigeria", *International Journal of Political Science*, 3(3) 2014.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] "Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures", *International Crisis Group Report*, 246: 8 March 2017.

as expanding its targets and tactics. By 2016 the group had maintained dominance in Chad especially in the Lake Chad Basin where their violent activities have been more prevalent.

By the beginning of 2017, the economy of Lake Chad Basin had been damaged and the death toll in Chad increased to hundreds, with over 100,000 persons displaced and 7,000 refugees on Chadian territory.[33] Between 2017 and 2019, the upsurge of deadly attacks by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups such as ISWAP on civilians and government security forces has remained constant with an astronomical rise in death tolls and humanitarian catastrophes.[34]

In 2019, Chad experienced an estimated twofold increase in the number of terrorist attacks in the Lake Chad region from the previous year.[35] There were approximately two attacks per week by Boko Haram and ISWAP around the eastern and northern shores of Lake Chad. Many of these were small raids to plunder supplies, but these terrorist groups also mounted several larger attacks of 100 or more fighters on Chadian military outposts. Several Chadian military units were also attacked with IEDs, including one on 26 May 2019 that killed four Chadian soldiers and one television journalist near N'Gounboua.[36] In October 2019, terrorists kidnapped a doctor and two nurses, all employees of the Chadian Ministry of Health, to provide treatment to wounded terrorist fighters.

On 23 March 2020, a bloody terrorist attack was staged on a Chadian army position at Boma, a peninsula on the Chadian side of the lake. The battle, lasting more than eight hours, was between Chadian security forces and Boko Haram and ISWAP, on a swampy semi-island. The battle resulted in heavy casualties for Chad. The attack also confirmed the resurgence of Boko Haram and ISWAP as a formidable terrorist group in Chad, and reconfirmed their capacity to sustain operations in

[33] Ibid.

[34] BBC World News, "ISWAP Avenges the Killing of Al Baghdadi by beheading 11 Christians in Nigeria." 27 December 2019. www.bbc,com/news/world-africa. (Accessed 20 August 2020).

[35] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Chad", *U.S. Department of State: Report Overview of Bureau of Counterterrorism*. https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/chad/. (Accessed 20 February 2021).

[36] Ibid.

the Lake Chad region.[37] Nevertheless, these attacks were not without corresponding retaliation by the Chadian security forces in concert with the military forces of neighbouring Niger and the MNJTF.

Official Government Responses to Terrorism in Chad

Following the Boko Haram attack on Baga Kawa between 3 and 7 January 2015 where a military base that was the headquarters of the MNJTF was overrun by fighters, and the town including about 16 surrounding villages of agriculturists and fishermen was burned by fighters, killing about 2,000 people, the Chadian government and her military awoke to THE reality of terrorism by Boko Haram in the region. Moreover, the series of attacks on her contagious neighbours like Cameroon and Nigeria and her border communities affected her trade relations and economic activities in the Lake Chad region.

In the same month of January 2015, Chad renewed her commitment to the Lake Chad Basic Countries (LCBC) regional security arrangement to flush the Boko Haram out of the region. On 23 January, a coalition of military forces from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger began a counter-insurgency campaign against Boko Haram.[38] Chad's return and commitment to the cooperation agreement between the LCB Countries led to reactivation of joint military operations against Boko Haram in March 2015,[39] as well as the subsequent relocation of the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force from Baga to N'Djamena after it was overrun by Boko Haram fighters.

On 4 February 2015, the Chadian Army conducted a military offensive against Boko Haram terrorists, the first to be launched against Boko Haram in the region when other neighbouring states were doing nothing

[37] Ibid.

[38] . "Nigeria Postpones Elections, Focuses on Major Offensive against Boko Haram", *The Christian Science Monitor. AP.* 7 February, 2015.

[39] . United Nations Human Rights Council Annual Report, Thirtieth Session, Agenda 2, *Violations and Abuses Committed by Boko Haram and the Impact on Human Rights in the Countries Affected*, 9 December, 2015.

besides holding Boko Haram at bay at their borders.[40] It was a 'clean-up operation' against Boko Haram in the region. The Chadian Army moved its troops into Niger and confronted the terrorists in Bosso before moving into Nigerian territory alongside Nigerien army in a military offensive against Boko Haram in Gamboru, the north of Borno state.[41]

However, the successes recorded by Chad in the offensive were watered down by the inability of Nigeria's defence and security forces to control the liberated areas, particularly the towns of Damasak and Malam Fatori. In addition, the poor coordination and weak intelligence that characterised the operations of the MNJTF contributed in frustrating Chadian operational success.[42] As a result, Boko Haram resurged and carried out the N'Djamena bombings, one of the deadliest attacks on the territory of Chad that spanned between June and July 2015.

The N'Djamena bombings reignited the Chadian government's efforts towards fighting terrorism in Chad, and the region in general. In a quick response, the Chadian government, in partnership with the Nigerian government, launched a joint military offensive against the terrorists. The offensive was a retaliatory military action against the Boko Haram attacks on Chad. It was a successful military operation that saw the decimation and dismantling of the remnants of Boko Haram operating in Chad and the entire Lake Chad Basin area.

As a follow-up, Chad deployed thousands of soldiers in strategic positions around Lake Chad in an effort to contain the terrorists within Nigeria, sometimes chasing them across the Nigerian border. In consolidation of the success of the military operations against the terrorists, President Idris Derby during his state visit to Baga Sola in October 2015 launched the establishment of vigilante groups in the various communities in the Lake Chad region.[43] The vigilantes are meant to augment the activities of the military for effective operational responses. The strategy has helped the army in intelligence gathering, to neutralise planned attacks in Chad.

[40] "Chadian Jets Bomb Nigerian Town in anti-Boko Haram Raid", *News24*, 5 February 2015; "Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures", *International Crisis Group Report 246*, 8 March 2017.

[41] "Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures", *International Crisis Group Report 246*, 8 March 2017.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

The Chadian military intervention in the fight against Boko Haram made a significant impact on the achievement of the MNJTF in the region, while also dispelling Nigeria's doubt over Chad's commitment in the region's conflict. It further helped the Chadian government consolidate alliances with Western powers and secure additional international funding.

Chad maintained a strong influence against Boko Haram threat in her territory and the Lake region until March 2020, when Boko Haram attacked her Army position at Boma on 23 March 2020. The attack was possible because the Chadian government had in November 2015 pulled its troops from Niger and Cameroon to maintain her security against the rising insecurity along its northern border with Libya.[44] It is remarkable to note here that the Chadian withdrawal from these countries was due to fiscal difficulties that resulted from the decline in Oil, her main revenue, as well as decline in international funding from international partners.[45]

The Boma attack triggered a retaliatory military offensive by Chadian military forces code named 'The Wrath of Boma'. The operation was launched on 31 March 2020, one week after Boko Haram's attack on the Chadian military base in which 92 Chadian soldiers were killed and the Chadian armoury looted.[46] The operational target was to destroy hidden Boko Haram bases and dismantle its forces from Chad's territory, which was achieved. Reportedly, it lasted for 10 days, which resulted in the killing of roughly over 1,000 terrorists, and arms taken from Chadian military armoury recaptured.[47] The operation was purely a Chadian offensive directed by President Derby, agreed upon with the government of Niger, and supported by a smaller MNJTF coordinated operation involving Nigerian troops. The intensity of Chadian combat

[44] United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017-Chad", 19 September 2018. https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1afc.html. (Accessed 20 February 2021).

[45] "Chad Withdraws Troops Fighting Boko Haram", *The Economist*, 18 October 2017. https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1446002928&Country=Niger&topic=Politics&subtopic=Fo_5. (Accessed September 2020).

[46] Daniel Eizenga, "Chad and the Escalating Fight against Boko Haram", *African Centre for Strategic Studies*, 20 April, 2020. https://www.africacentre.org/spotlight/chad-escalating-fight-against-boko-haram.html. (Accessed 22 February 2020).

[47] Ibid.

operations, the leadership displayed by President Derby, and the unprecedented results it yielded called for a review of MNJTF operations in the Lake Chad Basin as well as the commitment of member states in the war against Boko Haram in the region.

Chad's counterterrorism approach towards Boko Haram operations in and outside Chad is more or less military operations. However, there are other non-military measures adopted by the government of Chad to contain the activities of terrorists in Chad. These are legislation, law enforcement, and border security. For instance, in April 2017, Chad updated its penal code against criminality and all manner of terrorist acts in the country. Penalties for lesser terrorist offences were increased to life imprisonment.[48] The government also conducted further training in investigation, crisis response, and border security for the Chadian law enforcement units to strengthen basic command and control capacity. There has also been improvement in the Chadian National Police operational capacity which has rubbed-off on its performance by fostering more efficient and effective communication across bureau lines. Its forensic units have opened their files to the Regional Security Office for the sharing of photo and fingerprint records of suspected Boko Haram terrorists imprisoned in Chad, and for proper record and documentation.

In addition, due to high level insecurity in which the Chadian government is operating, the government has instituted screenings at borders to prevent infiltration of Boko Haram, ISWAP, and Central African militias, as well as the transit of illegal arms, drugs, and other contraband.[49] Border patrols have been provided by a combination of border security officials, gendarmes, police, and military. Border patrols are enhanced by using the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) provided by the United States at major ports of entry. There were also strict restrictions and tight controls on religious practices in the country, to ensure that the masses do not follow the teachings of Boko Haram, particularly the Lake Chad region after the 2015 N'Djamena attack. However, with the situation in Chad stabilising, such strict regulations have been relaxed.

[48] United States Department of State, "Country Report on Human Rights Practices". https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/html. (Accessed 22 February 2021).

[49] United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017-Chad", 19 September 2018.

International and Regional Counterterrorism Cooperation

The geography of Chad in the Lake Chad region and the Sahel puts it at the centre of conflicts, thus making Chad a leader in exporting security throughout the region.[50] With the rise of terrorism in the region, Chad has strengthened collaboration with neighbouring Lake Chad Basin countries and the G5 Sahel countries. In 2015, Chad reinstituted these countries' (G5 Sahel) commitment to join forces with the regional MNJTF to combat the rising influence of Boko Haram. Thus improving the balance of military strength against terrorism in the region. Reportedly, a week after Cameroonian President Paul Biya appealed for 'international solidarity', a large number of Chadian troops entered Cameroon while others went to Niger, signalling a major shift in Chad's stance towards Boko Haram.[51]

Additionally, Chad facilitated the reactivation of the MNJTF in 2015, and the subsequent relocation of its headquarters to N'Djamena from Baga. In support of the MNJTF, the government of Chad deployed 1,200 military personnel to Nigeria to combat Boko Haram. Since 2015, the government has made significant efforts in ensuring that the MNJTF achieved their desired mandate in the region. With the aid of the MNJTF, Chadian troops have been able to restrain the activities and incursion of the Boko Haram terrorists beyond their national frontiers and out of the Lake Chad Basin through military offensive led and coordinated by Chad.

In 2019, Chad's government deployed 2,600 service members to join border security operations as part of the task force and the G5 Sahel.[52] In the same year, the military sent another 600 soldiers to conduct security operations on the border with Sudan, and Chad supported the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) with 1,425 soldiers trained by the United States.[53] Chad's commitment to regional efforts has demonstrated its willingness and ability to engage and defeat terrorism in the region.

[50] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Chad", *U.S. Department of State: Report Overview of Bureau of Counterterrorism*.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

The threat of terrorism in Chad has led the country towards strengthening her international partnerships on counterterrorism and counter-insurgency measures. Chad renewed her partnership with the United States and other international partners after the N'Djamena attack in 2015.[54] Since then the United States has provided significant support for Chad's Special Anti-Terrorism Group and has begun a multi-year training programme to establish a counterterrorism investigations unit.

On countering terror financing, Chad is a member of the Task Force on Money Laundering in Central Africa (GABAC), a regional body similar to the Financial Action Task Force. Additionally, the National Agency for Financial Investigation (ANIF), which is the country's financial intelligence unit, is a member of the Egmont group, a united body of 167 Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) that provides a platform for the secure exchange of expertise and financial intelligence to combat money laundering and terrorist financing (ML/TF).[55]

For decades, Chad maintained close working relationships with France, and the French-led Operation Barkhane, a counter-insurgency operation prior to its closure that began on 1 August 2014 was headquartered in Chad. The Operation Barkhane sought to clampdown on Islamist terrorist groups in the African Sahel region.[56] It consists of a roughly 5,000 strong French force in cooperation with five countries, all of which are former French colonies that span the Sahel: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger (these five countries are collectively referred to as G5 Sahel), which is permanently headquartered in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad where it launches counterterrorism missions throughout the Sahel.[57]

Chad's partnership with the United States, France, and other international actors is yielding the expected results as there has been international

[54] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Chad", *U.S. Department of State: Report Overview of Bureau of Counterterrorism*.

[55] Egmont Group, 2021, https://egmontgroup.org/en/content/about/html. (Accessed 18 October, 2021).

[56] "France Sets Up Anti-Islamist Force in Africa's Sahel", *BBC News*, 14 July 2014. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28298230/html. (Accessed 18 October 2021).

[57] Maxime Larive, "Welcome to France's New War on Terror in Africa: Operation Barkhane", *The National Interest*, 7 August 2014. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/welcome-frances-new-war-terror-africa-operation-barkhane-11029/html. (Accessed 18 October 2021).

support both in training, logistics, and funding on counterterrorism measures in Chad and the Sahel region encouraged inter-state and inter-agency cooperation against terror financing through regional cooperation in the region that led to the establishment of GIABA and ANIF within the ambit of ECCAS and the AU. The strengthening of cross-border synergy with neighbouring countries to curtail terrorist funding was also part of the gains of the partnership.

In April 2017, the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global Programme against money laundering, the Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism (GPML) honoured Chad for its progress in the fight against money laundering and terror financing by conducting a three-day training of its staff in various counterterrorism units.[58] This has helped to further equip and prepare the various agencies and units to understand the current trends in counterterrorism considering the threat of Boko Haram and other terrorist cells across the region.

Emerging Security Challenges in Chad

The advent of Boko Haram and related terrorism in the Lake Chad basin has stimulated a multiplicity of challenges for Chad by virtue of her geographical proximity to neighbours vulnerable to terrorism. Some of these security challenges include humanitarian crisis, weakening of Chad's economy, human rights issues, banditry, and cross-border crimes. These are tacitly discussed as follows.

Humanitarian Crisis

At the core of the challenges created by Boko Haram terrorism in Chad is the huge humanitarian crisis the country faces in the Lake region. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that at the beginning of 2017, Boko Haram attacks in the region resulted in the deaths of hundreds and over 100,000 displaced persons with 7,000 of the refugees in Chadian territory.[59] Thus, confirming the report of the United Nations Political

[58] "Chad Makes Progress in the Fight against Money-Laundering and Terrorism Financing", https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/2017-03-27-gpml-chad.html. (Accessed 22 February 2021).

[59] "Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures", *International Crisis Group Report 246*, 8 March 2017.

Affairs Chief to the Security Council in September 2017 that notwithstanding the progress against Boko Haram, Africa's Lake Chad Basin suffers a 'staggering' and under-funded humanitarian crisis.[60] Reportedly, there were 130 attacks attributed to Boko Haram across four Lake Chad countries; Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria between June and July 2017 that resulted in 284 civilian fatalities and Chad is among the most affected after Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger.[61]

In addition, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) 2019 report revealed that about 10 million people living in the Lake Chad region are in need of humanitarian assistance.[62] The UN further stated that thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) who were sheltered in various camps in the region lack adequate accommodation, food, water, and sanitation.[63] It therefore indicates that a population of over 30 million living in the once flourishing Lake Chad Basin are now challenged with a unique and complex humanitarian crisis which is among the most severe in the world.

Weakening of Chad's Economy

The emergence of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region has resulted in the destruction of the economy of Chad at the Lake region and other neighbours that benefit from the trading activities at Lake Chad. The economic cost of counterterrorism operations is huge on the relatively poor economy of Chad and her neighbours. This is deepened by the dwindling prices of crude oil in the international market which is the major foreign exchange earner in Chad. For instance, the 2017 $1.5 billion regional fund, attracted only a merger of 40% fund support.[64]

[60] United Nations Security Council, "Terrorism, Other Security Threats Diverting Scarce Funds from Staggering Lake Chad Basin Humanitarian Crisis, Political Affairs Chief Tells Security Council", 13 September 2017. https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/terrorism-other-security-threats-diverting-scarce-funds-staggering-lake-chad-basin/html.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Leon Usigbe, "Drying Lake Chad Basin Gives Rise to Crisis: Food Insecurity, Conflicts, Terrorism, Displacement and Climate Change Effects Compounds Challenges", *Africa Renewal*, 24 December-March 2020, https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2019-march-2020/drying-lake-chad-basin-gives-rise-crisis/htl. (22 February 2021).

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

Human Rights Issues

One of the emerging security challenges of terrorism in Chad is the heightened human rights violations. Beside the Boko Haram activities that are enmeshed with human rights abuses such as abduction and kidnapping of people for ransom, killing, torturing, and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, violence against children and use of children in hostilities, attacks against civilian and protected objects, and destruction and appropriation of property, the Government of Chad in her bid to clampdown the terrorist also has violated human rights principles in the State.

The US 2019 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Chad revealed significant human rights violations such as arbitrary killings by the government or its agents; torture by security forces, arbitrary and incommunicado detention by the government, harsh and potentially life-threatening prison conditions for political prisoners, censorship of the press and restrictions on access to social network sites by the government conduct.[65]

There are also reports of arrest and detention of persons for defamation by the government, substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of movement, restrictions on political participation, pervasive acts of corruption, violence against women and girls to which government negligence significantly contributed, and criminalisation of same-sex.[66] On 25 May 2019, Yaya Awad, arrested for allegedly stealing a motorcycle, died in custody at the 7th Police district of N'Djamena after police fatally beat and otherwise injured him during interrogation.[67] Similarly, following a declaration in August 2019 of a state of emergence as a result of intercommunal conflicts in the provinces of Quaddai, Sila and Tibesti, there were reports of security forces beating and killing civilians and confiscating personal property in the provinces.[68]

[65] "2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Chad", *US Department of Stat, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, Report Overview*, https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/chad/html. (Accessed 23 February 2021).

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

Suffice it to say that human rights violations are not new in Chad, however, the terror and criminality being perpetuated by the Boko Haram group has exacerbated it. For example, changes to the penal code led to stricter laws and restrictions and greater secrecy in handling terrorists in the country, possibly leading to some issues of human rights abuses. In spite of all these, there have been no reports of authorities taking steps to prosecute or punish officials who committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the government, and impunity remained a problem.[69]

Banditry and Cross-Border Crimes

The sustained offensives by the Chadian defence forces against Boko Haram and the successful dislodgement of their strongholds in Chad have led to the fragmentation of terrorism into different forms of criminality in the region. One manifestation of this dynamic threat is the emergence of armed banditry in the region, in neighbouring communities within the Lake Chad region, and in neighbouring countries. Indeed, armed banditry and kidnapping are becoming common phenomena in the region to the point that they have been included as national security challenges. As remnants of the group are scampering for resources, kidnapping for ransom has become their stock in trade along Chad's borders with Cameroon, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic with target on expatriates. Several expatriates have been kidnapped in Chad and neighbouring communities between 2017 and to date.[70] In June 2018, six armed assailants shot a Chinese businesswoman to death during daylight hours outside her business located near the embassy's housing area in a heavily trafficked area of N'Djamena.

Though, year-to-year and geographical comparisons of crime remain difficult to assess in Chad because there are no official crime statistics, and because many incidents go unreported. However, events arising from media reports, as put together by the OSAC 2020 Review Report[71] on

[69] Ibid.

[70] "Chad 2020 Crime and Safety Report", *Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) Review Report*, 3 December, 2020. https://www.osac.gov/Countrt/Chad/Content?Detail/Report/7a7761c2-692d-49b-7-85ad-182ea5ccabf4/html. (Accessed 22 February 2021).

[71] Ibid.

Crime and Safety in Chad, showed that there was an astronomical rise in crime in N'Djamena.

Finally, the emergence of Boko Haram in the region and its affiliation with international terrorist groups like IS and Al Qaeda has created a safe haven for terrorism to flourish in the region. Currently, a number of the ungoverned spaces in the Lake Chad region and the neighbouring communities have been transformed to terrorist enclaves where they plan and execute their operations in the LCBCs.[72] This trend of events should be of serious concern to the government of Chad, the regional force, and the governments of neighbouring states, because destroying terrorist strongholds may be considered a success but containing the spread of terrorist ideology is a major issue to be resolved.

Conclusion

The chapter unravelled the scourge of terrorism in Chad, its implications to Chad and the Lake Chad countries as well as the Chadian government official responses to terrorism in the country and beyond her national frontiers, their successes and the challenges that characterised military operations in the region, given the collaboration with the MNJTF and member countries. It went further to establish the collaborative efforts of the Chadian government under Derby towards effective partnership with great powers like France and the United States, and the impact of such partnership towards Chad counterterrorism efforts in the region, and Chad in particular. Despite the successes achieved by Chad against the rising atrocities of Boko Haram in Chad and the entire Lake Chad region, the group has shown an uncommon resilience and adaptability, as it keeps resurfacing after each military offensive. A problem that has been attributed to operational effectiveness and poor cooperation on intelligence by the LCBC members and the MNJTF due to vested interest. The study therefore recommends the strengthening of MNJTF as a practicable strategy towards enhanced counterterrorism operations in Chad and the Lake Chad Basin area.

The commitment of member states of the LCBC is a major step towards achieving the objectives of the MNJTF mandate. The LCBCs should eschew suspicion among themselves and work towards the same

[72] Ibid.

objectives which are flushing out terrorism in the region and restoring peace. For instance, some of the successes recorded by the MNJTF were a result of Chad's renewed commitment to the regional force after the Baga attack in January 2015. To ensure the continued effectiveness of the MNJTF in the region, there is need to strengthen the cooperation of the LCBC beyond military operations to other areas of counterterrorism such as intelligence and support (financial and otherwise).

The porous nature of the borders among the LCBC is a serious challenge to fighting Boko Haram. Apart from the legitimate borders, there are more illegal routes in the region that aid the movement of the terrorist groups as well as their logistic support from collaborators within and outside the region. Between Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon, there are more than 200 illegal routes across the countries. Lack of effective management of these borders is a serious challenge to the fight against the terrorists. There is a need for members to strengthen border security in their respective countries, to be able to check against illegal movement across the border and influx of terrorism in the region. Operation Wrath of Boma was successful because member countries cooperated with Chad to close their borders during the onslaught which helped the MNJTF to mop-up the remnants of the group trying to enter into neighbouring countries.

For more than a decade since Boko Haram became a regional nemesis, the entire region has been heavily militarised because of the military response to contain the rising incidents of attacks on both civilians and the security forces. There is a need, therefore, to sustain development interventions to address the social needs of the people suffering from violence and displacement. Such a strategy would create ways for the government to reach out to the people and build relationships among the communities. Such relationships will inspire a sense of responsibility within the government and the people, thus helping to dispel the infiltration of terrorists in the country.

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CHAPTER 5

State Fragility and Terrorism in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Greg Fah Fombo and C. Nna-Emeka Okereke

Introduction

The DRC secured political independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960 and its political capital is Kinshasa. Presently, the country has 26 administrative provinces notably Bas-Uele (Lower Uele), Equateur, Haut-Katanga (Upper Katanga), Haut-Lomami (Upper Lomami), Haut-Uele (Upper Uele), Ituri, Kasai, Kasai-Central, Kasai-Oriental (East Kasai) and Kinshasa. Others are Kongo Central, Kwango, Kwily, Lomami, Lualaba, Mai-Ndombe, Maniema, Mongala, Nord Kivu (North Kivu), Nord-Ubangi (North Ubangi), Sankuru, Sud-Kivu (South Kivu), Sud-Ubangi (South Ubangi), Tanganyika, Tshopo and Tshuapa.

G. F. Fombo
Department of Political Science, University of Bamenda, Bamenda, Northwest Region, Cameroon

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@ndc.gov.ng

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As of July 2020, the DRC has an estimated population of 101.8 million people with an estimated annual population growth rate of 3.18%.[1] The country has more than 200 indigenous ethnic groups but four of the largest groups are Mongo, Luba, Kongo (all Bantu) and the Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic) constitute about 45% of the population. The official language in the country is French, while Lingala is the main trading language. Other languages widely spoken in the DRC include Kingwana, which is a dialect of Kiswahili, Kikongo and Tshiluba. Christianity is the predominant religion as Catholics constitute about 50% of the population while protestant Christians, Kimbanguist, Muslims and traditional religious worshipers constitute 10% each.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is located in Central Africa and is one of the countries that is in Africa's Great Lakes region. The DRC has a total area of 2,345,410 sq km comprising 2,267,600 sq km in terms of land and 77,810 sq km of water.[2] It has a coastline of 37 km and cumulative land boundary of 11,027 km with nine different African countries including Angola (2,646 km) of which 225 km is the boundary of Angola's dis-contiguous Cabinda province, Burundi (236 km, Central African Republic (1747 km) and the Republic of Congo, Brazzavile (1775 km). Others are Rwanda (221 km), South Sudan (714 km), Tanzania (479 km), Uganda (877 km) and Zambia (2,332 km).[3]

This chapter reflects on the political trajectory in the DRC with a view of establishing the interplay between the dynamics of politics and the evolution of terrorism in the DRC. It further examines the domestic and international efforts of the Government of Democratic Republic of Congo at counterterrorism. The paper notes that the decades of intractable conflicts alongside the existence of several armed groups pursuing conflicting and contradictory interests have contributed to the DRC being vulnerable. The situation is exploited by extremist groups seeking to project their influence in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region.

[1] CIA World Fact Book, "Democratic Republic of Congo" accessed 15 September 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/static/6a86a50f844c2e3db6f08913e6aa0f72/CG-summary.pdf.

[2] Democratic Republic of Congo" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, accessed 15 September 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/congo-democratic-republic-of-the/.

[3] Ibid.

Turbulent Political Trajectory in the Democratic Republic of Congo

No sooner had the DRC attained political independence than it was plunged into intractable conflicts which have lasted for six decades. Tracing this intractable DRC conundrum, Winsome Leslie described it as "the overt consequence arising from the superimposition of an overdeveloped, extractive and predatory state upon the vestiges of traditional societies and an ethnic mosaic".[4] Mutiny erupted in the country's military barely one week after independence following a statement by Belgium's last Army Chief in Congo, General Emile Janssens, that the country's independence meant no real changes for the military and society at large.[5] Belgium intervened in the country in response to the accompanying violence under the guise of protecting her nationals and interests. The Government of the newly independent state under Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba considered Belgian intervention as an infringement of the Congo's sovereignty and invited the United Nations to assist in the protection of its vast territory. However, prior to the arrival of the UN on 15 July 1960, Moise Tshombe had declared the secession of the mineral-rich Katanga province which the Belgians encouraged in their bid to protect their mining interests from the crisis brewing in the Congo.[6]

Responding to the inability of the UN to expedite the withdrawal of Belgian troops from the territory, Prime Minister Lumumba sought assistance from the Soviet Union, a move which led to his removal by President Kasavubu and the appointment of Joseph Ileo as Prime Minister. The brewing political turmoil was exploited by Col Mobutu Sese Seko who staged a military coup d'etat that prevented Joseph Ileo from assuming office as new Prime Minister. Having assumed power, Mobutu ordered the arrest of Patrice Lumumba who fled to the UN premises

[4] Winsome J. Leslie, *Zaire: Continuity and political change in an oppressive state* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), p. 5.

[5] Jermaine O. McCalpin, "Historicity of a Crisis: The Origins of the Congo War" in John F. Clark (ed.), *The African stakes in the Congo war* (Kampala: Fountain, 2003) p. 34.

[6] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Conflict and Development in Africa: Challenges of the African Union" being Doctor of Philosophy thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria Nsukka, July 2007, pp. 76–77.

for protection on the grounds that he incited the military to mutiny.[7] Although Lumumba was later killed by forces loyal to Moise Tshombe after he left the UN guards in January 1961, the conflict in Congo deepened. Following the death of Lumumba, one of his subordinates named Antoine Gisenga formed a new political movement called Parti Solidarite Africaine (PSA) or the African Solidarity Movement and mounted political and armed opposition to the regime in power. Gisenga's movement held sway in Stanleyville which he declared Congo's capital while Albert Kalonji held power in secessionist Kasai province. For his part, Moise Tshombe claimed control over secessionist Katanga until January 1963 when he abandoned the secessionist movement and fled into exile.

Following the reconvening of Congo's parliament, a new Government led by Cyrille Adoula was formed on 2 August 1961. The Adoula administration tended to unify Congo however temporarily by halting the extremist forces of Antoine Gizenga which represented the Lumumba mystique.[8] The major weaknesses of the Adoula administration were the appointment of Gizenga and some of his key supporters to important positions and the non-participation of Katanga representatives in its formation.[9] It is believed that the reintegration of Katanga is key for the economic viability of DRC and only peaceful integration was necessary to avoid the destruction of Katanga's economic base and further chaos in the country.

The efforts of foreign powers like the United States and the United Nations Operation in the Congo (UNOC), to secure the reintegration of Katanga through police actions were frustrated by the sudden death of the United Nations Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjold. Similarly, pressures mounted on Adoula and Moshe Tshombe, to embark on negotiation also failed to yield positive results. The Adoula administration further came under immense domestic pressures from opposition elements in both Leopoldville and Stanleyville to either deploy military actions against Katanga or resign from office.[10]

[7] Ibid.

[8] Office of the historian, "Foreign relations of the United States, 1864–1968: Memorandum for the Special Group" Volume XXIII, Congo, 1960–1968 Washington, 16 November 1061; accessed 15, October 2021, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v23/d100.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

The inability of the Adoula administration to adequately contain the tensions prevailing in the country led to his resignation and a political vacuum which allowed Tshombe to return in 1964 to lead a new administration formed by President Kasavubu. A new constitution was adopted to replace the independence constitution and the country changed its name to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). President Kasavubu however dismissed Tshombe following political disagreements between them and appointed Evariste Kimba as Prime Minister. However, prior to Kimba's assumption of office, Mobutu Sese Seko overthrew the civilian administration and returned to power on 25 November 1965 which caused the eventual collapse of the First Republic in the country.

Mobutu Sese Seko changed the country's name to the Republic of Zaire in 1971 and ruled dictatorially until 1997 when he was pushed out of office by the predominantly Banyamulenge rebel forces of Alliance des Forces Democratique pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire (ADFL) under the command of Laurent Kabila. The ADFL comprised five allies including: Banyamulenge militia, Marxist-oriented People's Progressive Party, a Kuba militia group from Southeast Kasai and a Shaba group comprising more than half a million Luba who fled Shaba for Kasai as well as a Kissase group that comprised Mai-Mai warriors.[11] The support of Tutsi-led Rwanda which was motivated by the drive to neutralise any cross-border invasion by the Hutu regime that was defeated and driven away from power by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1994, a victory which brought an end to the Rwandan genocide was significant. In addition, the prolonged absence of Mobutu Sese Seko, who was abroad getting treatment for cancer, contributed to the success of the ADFL rebellion.[12]

Although Mobutu returned to the country in December 1996, the ADFL rebellion had gained more momentum and recorded many successes which included the seizure of goldmines in the east as well as the capture of Goma and Kisangani. Mobutu fled to Morocco in May 1997 thereby paving the way for the eventual capture of Kinshasa and seizure of power by Laurent Kabila who renamed the country the DRC and introduced a new currency.

[11] McCalpin, Op. Cit, p. 47.

[12] Okereke, Op. Cit.

Barely a year in office elapsed that new political turmoil emerged to heighten historical grievances. The Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) of Wamba dia Wamba, which established its headquarters at the border town of Goma emerged as the leader of the new rebellion. In May 1999, Wamba was deposed and replaced by Emile Ilunga but several of Wamba's supporters still remained loyal to him. Besides the RCD, Jean Pierre Bemba established another rebel group under the name Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo (MLC) in November 1998 with headquarters in Kisangani.[13]

On the one hand, the ensuing conflict in DRC was internationalised and sometimes described as Africa's World War. This was because of the involvement of various African countries either in support of the Kabila regime or in support of the rebels. For instance, Kabila's erstwhile ally Rwanda also joined forces with the rebels supporting the RCD because it was determined to establish a buffer zone against Hutu invasion.[14] Similarly, the Tutsi-dominated Government in Burundi also took sides with which group in the DRC conflict to contain the Hutu threat to its suzerainty. On its part, Uganda, partly in support of its Rwanda ally, supported the MLC rebels.

On the other hand, the Kabila regime in DRC was supported by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Angola's alliance with Kabila's regime was informed by the need to sustain Kabila's support against rebels of the Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA) or National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.[15] On its part, Namibia, which had no direct contiguous threat with the DRC, deployed 2,000 troops in support of the Kabila regime as part of the old ties between her ruling South West Africa Peoples' organisation (SWAPO) and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), both of which were liberation movements fighting against colonialism in Southern Africa. Zimbabwe's support for Kabila is believed to have been informed by Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe's quest to play the role of regional politics as Mugabe declared that it was his duty to assist fellow

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

Head of State to quell the rebellion.[16] President Laurent Kabila was assassinated by one of his bodyguards in January 2001 and was succeeded by his son, Joseph Kabila who ruled the conflict-ridden country till 2019 when he handed over the realm of governance to opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi who won the 30 December 2018 presidential election by the country's Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI).

Overview of Terrorism in Democratic Republic of Congo

The World Data Organization classified the risk of terrorism in the DRC over the past few years as very high. Between 2013 and 2017, a total of 489 terrorist incidents were recorded in DRC resulting in the death of 1,727 while 742 other injured and a total of 1,775 persons were kidnapped for ransom in 207 incidents but only extorted in 23 incidents.[17]

In documenting terrorist incidents in DRC, an act is considered terrorism if it is aimed at attaining political, economic, religious or social goals and not for strictly economic motive. In addition, the incident must not be legitimised by warfare activities as outlined in the Geneva Convention of 1949. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 contain a more detailed breakdown of targets of attacks in the DRC and the most affected regions respectively between 2013 and 2017 while Table 5.3 contains the highlight of terrorist organisations in the DRC as obtained from the World Data information on terrorism in the country.

In understanding the scourge of terrorism in the DRC, it is important to note that although there exist over 100 armed groups in the DRC, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and actors in the international community often exhibit caution in labelling them as terrorist groups. This caution was reinforced by the decision of former President Joseph Kabila to label some anti-Kabila groups among the opposition as terrorists. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has however assumed the status as an active partner of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

[16] Ibid.

[17] World Data, "Terrorism in the Democratic Republic of Congo" accessed 15 September 2021, www.worlddata.info/africa/congo-kinshasa/terrorism.php.

Table 5.1 Most frequent targets in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2013 to 2017)

Target	*Attacks*	*Killed*	*Injured*	*Hostages*
Private citizens	358	1,297	537	1,443
Military	52	289	103	81
Government	51	126	157	105
Police	44	207	33	52
Business	17	74	15	183
NGO	14	10	8	61
Journalists & Media	10	18	7	8
Religious institutions	5	1	1	10
Airports & Aircrafts	3	47	10	0
Non-state militias	3	31	0	0

Source www.worlddata.info/africa/congo-kinshasa/terrorism.php

Table 5.2 Most affected regions (2013 to 2017)

Region	*Attacks*	*Killed*	*Injured*	*Hostages*
North Kivu	271	1,158	444	676
Orientale	69	86	72	254
Ituri	29	40	18	189
South Kivu	22	63	143	201
Katanga	19	25	1	16
Haut-Uele	14	6	0	172
Kasai-Central	9	112	7	61
Bas-Uele	9	1	1	138
Kasai-Oriental	9	1	0	9
Kinshasa	9	92	15	1
Haut-Katanga	4	5	3	20
Maniema	4	0	3	17
Tanganyika	4	62	33	0
Mongala	3	17	0	0
Bas-Congo	2	3	0	0
Kasai Central	2	49	0	0
Equateur	1	1	0	0
Lualaba	1	0	1	0
Equator	1	0	0	0
Lomami	1	0	0	0

Source www.worlddata.info/africa/congo-kinshasa/terrorism.php

Table 5.3 Terrorist organisations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Organisation	*Attacks*	*Killed*	*Injured*	*Hostages*
Mayi Mayi	40	71	41	245
Nyatura Militia	19	24	18	22
Kamwina Nsapu Militia	19	181	14	61
Mai Mai Simba Militia	11	45	6	128
Mai Mai Bakata Katanga Militia	9	0	0	9
M23	6	5	14	0
Raia Mutomboki Militia	6	10	3	19
Mai Mai Mazembe Militia	6	80	25	0
Twa Militia	4	62	33	0
Colonel Albert Kahasha Militia	1	20	0	0
Mai Mai Manu Militia	1	0	1	0

Source www.worlddata.info/africa/congo-kinshasa/terrorism.php

The ADF emerged from the 1991 disputed election of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) which created two rival camps with one competing for the leadership of the UMSC with the support of the Tabligh sheiks. Following a court case over the disputed election, the court upheld the victory of a rival group in the election thereby sparking violence by a group that later became the ADF. One faction of the group under the leadership of Jamil Mukulu stormed the UMSC headquarters at the old Kampala Mosque in protests against the judgement. The accompanying violence resulted in the killing of several police officers and arrest of Mukulu and his disciples. This Mukulu faction later formed a rebel group in western Uganda with the collaboration of Yusuf Kabanda from where they launched hostilities against the Government of Uganda. Consequently, the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) engaged the ADF which already had an alliance with the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, in sustained counter-insurgency operations leading to the destruction of their camps at Hoima. The ADF was forced to flee across the national territory into Eastern DRC.

The fighter of the ADF-NALU alliance became involved in the complex conflict environment of both DRC and the larger Great Lakes region to the extent that the group received support for its partisanship in the proxy war between former President Mobutu Sese Seko of DRC and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. This suggests that at the early stages of its existence, the objective of the ADF was neither to promote the Salafi

version of Islam in Uganda, nor to overthrow the NRM Government. Rather, it seemed more concerned with establishing a permanent sphere of influence. It therefore sought to establish and sustain relationships with the Vuba people, a minority group living in Bambua-Kisika, in Beni town, which enabled the group to recruit Vuba population, marry Vuba women and also acquire land for its training camps. In addition and of significant importance is the fact that the relationship enabled the ADF and Vuba leaders to engage in timber and gold trafficking, which thus contributed to financing its operations.[18] This was important because the group now had territory from where it could launch attacks and resources to sustain its operations.

Besides the ADF, there also existed other Congolese rebel groups operating in Beni such as the Congolese Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie - Kisangani (RCD-K) which overran Beni and formed an alliance with the ADF. Raids carried out by the ADF in Uganda in the late 1990s resulted in forced migrations as over 100,000 people especially in Bundibugyo district fled their homes as the rebel group also abducted hundreds of youths. With the advent of the twenty-first century, the capabilities of the ADF began to decline as the interplay of domestic and external factors weighed on the group's activities until its alliance with ISIS.

The background concerning the ADF links with ISIS has been traced to 2016 and 2017, when some ADF members under the name "Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen" initiated sympathies and contact with extremist groups through online interactions while also displaying the ISIS flag. Subsequently, ISIS claimed responsibility for ADF attacks on the DRC military base near Kamango on 16 April 2019. Following the establishment of links between the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Islamic State (ISIS), the ADF leader, Seka Baluku, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in July 2019. While the extent of links between the two armed groups remains unclear, the alliance led to the establishment

[18] Titeca, K., &Vlassenroot, K. "Rebels without borders in the Rwenzori borderland? A biography of the Allied Democratic Forces" *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *6*(1), 2012, pp. 154–176.

of the Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP) with a mandate to promote and protect its presence in Central, East and Southern Africa.[19]

The ADF further unleashed several attacks on the civil population, Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and peace personnel of the United Nations Organisations Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) located in Beni Territory, North Kivu and southern parts of Ituri in eastern DRC. Available statistics of the Kivu Security Tracker indicate that as of 13 December 2019, the ADF killed approximately 310 civilians in North Kivu with additional 32 persons being killed before the end of December as reported in other media sources. By February 2020, the United Nations estimated that the rebel group had killed not fewer than 849 civilians in North Kivu province.[20] The continued attacks on civilians have been explained by the ADF as retaliation for assaults launched against it since the end of October 2019 by the DRC military and continued beyond the COVID-19 period.

Checklist of major terrorist acts targeted at DRC in 2021 include:

- The massacre of 22 civilians, including 6 members of the same family in the village of Mwenda in the territory of Beni in the province of North Kivu by the ADF on Monday, 4 January.
- The killing of three civilians and one soldier when the Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC) invaded three villages on Tuesday 5 January and set several homes on fire.
- On Sunday 10 January 2021, six park rangers were killed and one injured when the Mai-Mai militias attacked the Congo Gorilla Reserve.
- Forty-six pygmies were killed and another two wounded when the ADF fighters launched attack on a local chiefdom known as Walese Vonkutu around the border areas between Ituri province and North Kivu province on Tuesday 14 January 2021.
- On Saturday 6 February 2021, the ADF slit the throats of 12 farmers (eight were male while four were female) civilians at Mabule village.

[19] United States Department of States, "Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Democratic Republic of Congo" accessed 5 October 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/.

[20] Ibid.

- Fifteen civilians were killed by suspected ADF terrorist groups in the multiple districts of Bulongo, Beni territory and North Kivu.
- In North Kivu, a total of 19 persons including 10 soldiers were killed on Saturday 1 May when armed groups invaded 2 villages in the North Kivu regional hub of Beni. This led to a state of siege in both provinces.
- A total of 55 persons were killed on Monday 31 May 2021 following an assault by the ADF on villages in eastern DRC especially the village of Tchabi and a camp for displaced persons near Boga where several houses were bunk.
- In another development, 10 persons were killed in the City of Beni in eastern DRC in an attack in which the ADF was blamed. In addition, the ADF also set several houses on fire in Beu district.
- On Monday 26 July, 16 persons were killed by suspected members of the Uganda-based ADF.
- On 2 August 2021, the ADF killed 16 civilians including 2 women at Idohu village in Ituri province despite the presence of a dozen FARDC soldiers thereby fuelling suspicions that some soldiers are involved in the attacks in Ituri province.
- The ADF further attacked and killed 10 soldiers in southern Tchabi in Ituri province while several other soldiers were wounded in the attacks.
- Fighters of the ADF killed 19 civilians at Kasanzi village in the Beni area of North Kivu province on Saturday 28 August 2021.
- Islamist ambushed and burnt a convoy under military escort of 16 vehicles in Ofaye along the Komanda-Eringeti road under Irumu territory on Wednesday 1 September 2021. Four civilians were killed while 60 persons were declared missing as a result of the incident.
- On Sunday 5 September 2021, suspected ADF rebels killed 30 people in the Ituri area of northeast DRC.
- In early September 2021, the ISCAP accepted responsibility for the killing of nine civilians and burning of several houses in two separate attacks on Congolese troops and civilians that were executed at Ndimo village in Ituri and Banande Kainama in Beni.[21]

[21] SITE Intelligence, "ISCAP claims 9 Christian civilians killed, houses torched in two attacks in DR Congo" 13 September 2021.

Attempts at explaining the sustained attacks on the villages have been attributed to either retaliation against military operations, the search for food and medicine and accusations against communities suspected of sharing information with security agencies on ADF positions and activities.[22] The Kivu Security Tracker observes that "in all likelihood, the aim of such ADF killings is to discredit and put pressure on the Congolese authorities, to divide the force pursuing them, and to divide society as a whole".[23]

Generally, the spate of killings by NSAGs and local militias increased the incidences of human displacements in DRC. For example, in the wake of attacks on the Idohu, several inhabitants fled to Komanda, which already had thousands of people coming in. For the first time you see internally displaced peoples (IDPs) mounting great pressures on the local communities especially in terms of access to food, schools and healthcare facilities. In March 2021, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) raised an alarm about the increase in attacks by the ADF in northeast DRC in which more than 200 persons were killed and an estimated 40,000 persons displaced in DRC's Beni territory of North Kivu province and some villages in the Ituri province within the first Quarter of 2021.[24] The UNHCR alleged that the ADF invaded 25 villages in which they kidnapped more than 70 persons and also burnt dozens of houses between January and mid-March 2021 in addition to the 465 Congolese the group killed in 2020.[25] The sustained insecurities deepened the humanitarian situation in the country which already had an estimated 100,000 IDPs in need of humanitarian protection in the Beni area.

By mid-August 2021, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated there were about 1.8 million IDPs in North Kivu and 1.7 million IDPs in Ituri respectively, which included

[22] Ibid.

[23] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, "DR Congo: Massacres persist despite martial law" *Reliefweb*, accessed 5 October 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-massacres-persist-despite-martial-law.

[24] United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "Armed attacks kill hundreds, displace 40,000 civilians in northeast DR Congo" *Press Release* 19 March 2021, accessed 15 September 2021.

[25] Ibid.

a disproportionately high number of women and children.[26] Evolving threats of terrorism further manifested in the DRC following the alleged massacre of at least 272 people mostly civilians in the North Kivu's Kisise village by the M23 rebel group in December 2022. The Government of the DRC alleged that the Paul Kagame regime in neighbouring Rwanda continues to provide support to the M23 who are ethnic Tutsi, and the growing tensions have led to the deployment of Burundi and Kenyan troops by the East Africa Community as part of regional efforts to quell the violence. It is instructive to note that the Government of DRC considers the Rwanda-backed M23, a terrorist organisation.[27] In a telephone conversation with Mr. Idrys Amir, African Union's Charge d'Affaires in DRC, the country's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mrs. Gracia Yamba Kazadi expressed DRC Government's indignation at AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat's description of the M23 as a politico-military opposition to the Congolese Government. In her words,

> The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo firmly recalls that the M23 can in no way be considered an opposition force, but that it is a terrorist group supported by Rwanda with the aim of plundering the natural resources of the east of the country, in violation of national sovereignty and international law.[28]

So far, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in DRC, David McLachland-Karr specifically noted that over five million IDPs are scattered across DRC making the country which is one of the largest IDP populations in Africa.[29] It is now imperative to examine official response to terrorism in DRC at national, regional and international levels.

[26] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, "DR Congo: Massacres persist despite martial law" *Reliefweb*, accessed 5 October 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-massacres-persist-despite-martial-law.

[27] Gracia Yamba Kazadi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Democratic Republic of Congo on X handle, @HonGraciaYamba on 5.30 pm on 26 January 2025.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

Counterterrorism Engagements in Democratic Republic of Congo

The DRC Government has taken several legal, policy and operational measures to combat the scourge of terrorism in the country. Such measures involve the deployment of defence and security forces, attempts to enact requisite legal frameworks and engaging international partners to help in counter-terrorist efforts. However, the rate of success in the implementation of the DRCs counterterrorism and counter-insurgency measures remains varied.

As part of measures to combat terrorism in the country, the Government of the DRC introduced a "state of siege" in which members of the security forces replaced top officials in North Kivu and the neighbouring Ituri province, and where the military mounted sustained operations against the ADF in 2019. However, despite the efforts of the defence and security agencies, the United Nations estimated that by February 2020, the rebel group still managed to kill over 849 civilians in North Kivu province.[30]

Furthermore, as a response to the existence of over 100 NSAGs in the DRC and the realisation that the country lacked requisite structures and processes for managing the numerous rebels and militias involved, the Tshisekedi administration launched a Disarmament, Demobilisation, Community Recovery and Stabilisation (DDCRS) programme. However, the appointment of Tommy Tambwe as Coordinator of the DDCRS provoked public concerns on human rights issues because of his role as a former leader of a Rwanda-backed rebel group accused of numerous human rights abuses.

The efforts of the Government of DRC to enact comprehensive counterterrorism legislation processed by the National Assembly in December 2018 was stalled by the country's Senate and this move was resisted till the exit of the Joseph Kabila administration in 2020. This was because members of the opposition and civil society groups expressed concerns the erstwhile Joseph Kabila administration could utilise the draft bill to oppose opposition parties and critics.

In May 2021, the Government of DRC imposed martial law in the country to strengthen its counterterrorism offensives against various non-state armed groups (NSAGs) that were committing terrorist acts against

[30] US Department of States, Op. Cit.

the citizen and State in DRC. It is the position of the Government that the imposition of martial law is a shock therapy that will not be permanent. This was captured by Government spokesman, Patrick Muyaya who noted that while the solution to the attacks must start with the military component, it cannot be only military.[31] Official sources claim that the imposition of martial law was also targeted to combat corruption as military sources involved in the "Tango Four" anti-graft investigation noted that several military personnel were arrested over alleged misappropriation of funds, embezzlement and maintaining fake payrolls of non-existent soldiers.[32] The utility of the martial law was further reiterated by the Head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keita who described it as a "very important tool in the fight against insecurity in the east and in both (North Kivu and Ituri) provinces in particular" while urging that "martial law should be accepted at the community, civil society, and opinion leadership levels".[33]

It is, however, important to note that the imposition of martial law did not halt the attacks and accompanying carnage. At least 739 civilians were killed in Ituri province, North Kivu province between 6 May when the martial law commenced and 10 September 2021 of which 672 were killed by NSAGs and 67 were killed by the defence and security forces.[34] Available statistics indicate that in July 2021, the ADF launched 18 different attacks on civilians and government forces in Beni territory, North Kivu which resulted to the death of 90 civilians. The ADF further killed 19 civilians and abducted several others in Kalungura area of Beni territory on 27 August while four other persons were also killed following an ambush on a large convoy of MONUSCO peacekeepers and Congolese soldiers around Komanda in Ituri province on 1 September 2021. This incident was accompanied by the massacre of 30 civilians at Makutano village in Ituri province on 3 September by the ADF.[35] As

[31] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, "DR Congo: Massacres persist despite martial law" *Reliefweb*, accessed 5 October 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-massacres-persist-despite-martial-law.

[32] Ibid.

[33] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, "DR Congo: Massacres persist despite martial law" *Reliefweb*, accessed 5 October 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-massacres-persist-despite-martial-law.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

the attacks intensify, the Congolese armed forces allegedly engage militias drawn from local population of the ethnic Banyaabwisha from the North Kiva defectors from the ADF as proxy forces to combat the terrorists in Tchabi areas of Ituri province.

Following the intensification of ADF attacks, the continued relevance of martial law provoked negative backlash from certain segments of the population. For instance, the *Lutte pour le Changement* (LUCHA) or Citizens Movement for Change demanded an end of the martial law in affected provinces as the Tshisekedi administration has relied on the law to inhibit human rights.[36]

Another human rights concern on the official responses of the DRC Government to the terrorist threats in the country was the appointment of Brigadier-General Muhindo Akili Mundos as Deputy Inspector-General in 2020 by President Tshisekedi. This appointment is considered sensitive bearing in mind that Brig Gen Mundos is on the United Nations sanctions list following the outcome of the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Congo for his role as commander of DRC military operations against the ADF between August 2014 and June 2015. The UN Expert report noted that the Congolese army under his command recruited several ADF fighters, former fighters of Mai-Mai local armed groups who participated in the massacres at Beni in October 2014.

International Cooperation

The commitment of the Government of the DRC to counterterrorism engagements is further sustained by the DRCs membership in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). The DRC is also a member of the Central Africa anti-money laundering agency *Groupe d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique Centrale* (GABAC) which is a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) styled institution for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism in Central Africa. In line with its commitments to the GABAC, the Government of DRC took measures to freeze the accounts and assets of DRC-based Saleh Assi and Lebanon-based Nazem

[36] Ibid.

Said Ahmad for supporting Specially Designated Global Terrorists.[37] The imperative of regional cooperation is underscored by the transnational linkages that facilitate terrorism enterprise within its neighbourhood and its utility to the quest for stability in eastern DRC.

The DRC Government is part of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS which works to limit ISIS expansion in North Kivu. As part of its commitment to counterterrorism, President Felix Tshisekedi embarked on state visit to the United States in April 2019 to solicit collaboration against terrorists operating in DRC through technical partnerships on capacity building for the defence and security in the areas of civil-military relation, strategic communication, asymmetric warfare, human rights and related issues involved in counterterrorism operations.[38] In August 2021, President Felix Tshisekedi gave approval to US Special Forces to assist the country's military combat against ADF which the United States labelled the deadliest of dozens of armed militia operating in DRC.[39]

The US Department of State designated the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)/*Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen* in DRC as Foreign-based Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (as amended) and their leaders including Seka Musa Baluku, were classified as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT) on 10 March 2021 under Executive Order 13224.[40] Seka Baluku, alongside five other ADF members were sanctioned under the Global Magnitsky sanctions programme for their involvement in severe human rights abuses in early 2020. Baluku was further listed in a United Nations

[37] This action was in response to US Treasury sanctions designation against both individuals in December 2019; Also see United States Department of States, "Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Democratic Republic of Congo" accessed 5 October 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/.

[38] United States Department of States, "Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Democratic Republic of Congo" accessed 5 October 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/.

[39] "DR Congo accepts US military help against ADF militia" Al Jazeera News, 16 August; accessed 15 September 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/16/dr-congo-accepts-us-military-help-against-adf-militia.

[40] United States Department of State, "State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique" 10 March 2021; accessed 14 September 2021, https://www.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique/.

sanctions listing under the DR Congo sanctions programme.[41] The US Department of State labelled them as ISIS-DRC because they are affiliated with the jihadist group Islamic State (IS). Both groups operate in the eastern part of the country and have been responsible for attacks in North Kivu and Ituri provinces.[42]

In addition to the US designation and public pronouncement of allegiance to ISIS by the ADF, experts from the United Nations noted in June 2021 that the ISIL/ISIS and ADF have benefited from making joint public statements "complementing and amplifying ADF local propaganda and suggesting increased global reach for ISIL…"[43] The report of the UN experts did not however find conclusive evidence of ISIL command and control over ADF operations, or of ISIL direct support to ADF, either financial, human or material.[44] It however noted that the ADF is enhancing its bomb-making capacities, utilising expertise recruited from East Africa and that the bombs were used for tactical, offensive, defensive and harassment purposes rather than as a terrorist tool. The UN experts further noted that the ADF enhanced its capacities through recruitment, superior command over terrain and planting bombs that outstripped the capabilities of the Congolese army.[45]

The US Bureau for Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) provided training for about 900 border personnel of DRC's *Direction Centrale de la Police des Frontieres Congolaise* (Central Border Police Directorate) whose mandate centres on security and surveillance activities at border crossings. However, few of the INL-trained officers remain with the border units as a result of the high turnover rates associated with frequent postings. The anti-riot unit of the Congolese national police

[41] Ibid.

[42] United States Department of State, "State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique" 10 March 2021; accessed 14 September 2021, https://www.state.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-isis-affiliates-and-leaders-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-mozambique/.

[43] Hereward Holland, Alessandra Prentice and Peter Graff, "UN finds no evidence of Islamic State controlover Congomilitia" *Reuters*, 16June 2021; accessed 24September2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-finds-no-evidence-islamic-state-control-over-congo-militia-2021-06-16/.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

known as *Légion Nationale d'Intervention* has a designated counterterrorism squad which has limited staff and receives no specialised training or equipment.

Concerning border control, the DRC lacks the capacity to effectively patrol and conduct robust surveillance of the 6,835 miles of land and lake borders which has over 400 official border posts with nine contiguous neighbours. The Directorate of Migrations therefore relies on the Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS) of the International Organisation of Migrations (IOM) for monitoring movement-related activities at the border areas.[46]

The engagement of DRC military in counterterrorism and counter-insurgency operations further received international support from MONUSCO which commenced joint military operations with the Congolese army in August 2021. Within the framework of support, the MONUSCO provided Congolese troops with air and logistical support, exchange of intelligence and surveillance capacity including a combat units known as the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) that was established in 2013 as a robust unit of the MONUSCO.[47] In April 2021, President Tshisekedi requested the FIB to support Congolese to combat terrorism and violence in the country's eastern region with most efficacy. It is however important that conscious efforts be made to build trust with the population about protection needs and the imperative of effective collaboration with counterterrorism and counter-insurgency personnel.

Conclusion

The challenge of terrorism in the DRC is real and requires sustained domestic and international engagements. The situation is exacerbated by the decades of intractable conflicts in the country and the existence of several NSAGs fighting succeeding administrations in the country. The allegiance of the ADF to the Islamic State and the accompanying escalation of armed violence, fratricidal carnage and humanitarian emergencies

[46] The MIDAS is a computerised personal identification and recognition system for tracking migrations especially across international boundaries.

[47] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, "DR Congo: Massacres persist despite martial law" *Reliefweb*, accessed 5 October 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-massacres-persist-despite-martial-law.

constitutes a significant period in the history of the country's never-ending conflicts that squarely place DRC as a country of concern for terrorism analysis. Such cooperation is believed to have been informed by the need to attract extremist fighters and logistics for the ADF while also sustaining territorial relevance and continued visibility of the ISIS in global security discourses.

While it is accepted that the ADF-IS alliance could be a potent threat to peace and stability in the country, it is sometimes argued that an ISIS-focused counterterrorism response to the ADF risks in DRC could be misleading, making it difficult to adequately understand the dynamics of terrorism and violent conflicts in DRC. Notwithstanding, the real strategic danger associated with the growing links between the ADF and the Islamic State is that the internal conflicts in DRC have over the decades provided sanctuaries for armed groups which could be exploited by the Islamic State henceforth to spread its territorial spread to new frontiers in Central Africa and beyond. To this effect, it is necessary that the DRC counterterrorism and counter-insurgency efforts be sustained to effectively combat terrorism in Central Africa.

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PART II

East and Horn of Africa

CHAPTER 6

Understanding Terrorism in East Africa

Richard Barno and James Kamotho

Introduction

The threat of terrorism is an ever-present reality in the East and the Horn of Africa region. Countries in the region, from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda are, to varying degrees, both sources and victims of terrorism. With very slight deviations, the most prevalent threat of terrorism in the greater East Africa region is that posed by Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabaab and the Daesh (ISIS) and their respective regional affiliates, including the Allied Democratic Front (ADF). These organizations constitute the most organized ideological purveyors of terror in the region, but are by no means the only actors.

The region has to contend with an Al-Shabaab and Daesh that have ideological and operational ties to Al-Qaeda, and are expanding and taking root in the greater East Africa region all the way to Mozambique. These groups are well organized politically and are anchored in the political philosophy and deeply rooted religious dogma. In addition, they

R. Barno · J. Kamotho (✉)
Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: jameskamotho@hotmail.com

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have respectable combat capabilities that utilize the ungoverned and or poorly governed territories as important theatre of operation, leveraging and exploiting existing political, economic, identity and other grievances.

It is in the light of above that this examination of the historical context of terror in the region through its manifestation of it in select member countries, that creates an inescapable conclusion of terrorism as a continuing concern requiring, not a re invention of new counter-terrorism tools, but the adaptation of existing tools to the emerging technological and behavioural environment.

Historical Overview and Context of the Threat in East Africa

Countries of East Africa are not spared of terrorist attacks in the continent. A tacit review of the nature and manifestation of terrorism in East Africa with emphasis on the terrorist risks and vulnerabilities in specific East African countries are highlighted below.

Djibouti

Terrorism in Djibouti has presented itself in two phases—internal sectarian violence arising out of perceptions of marginalization; and vulnerabilities to attacks by both Daesh and Al-Shabaab based in Somalia and Yemen as a result of geo-strategic position. Initially, as Al-Qaeda was setting bases in Sudan and Somalia, the leadership viewed Djibouti as a useful logistical hub for transiting resources and personnel given, particularly, Djibouti globally linked financial network, and the concurrent linkages between Djibouti and Somalia.[1] The historical threat posed by Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy-Front pour la Restauration de L'Unite et la Democratie (FRUD), an Afar group that accused the Issa dominated government of marginalization, ended with a peace agreement in 1994 that promoted inclusivity of the Afar in Djibouti governance. The agreement together with the Djibouti military success at neutralizing the FRUD-Armé's capability to conduct small-arms attacks against military assets and convoys in the Obock region, substantially

[1] USIP. (2004, January 13). Terrorism in the Horn of Africa. Retrieved from United States Institute of Peace: https://www.usip.org/publications/2004/01/terrorism-horn-africa.

downgraded the threat from FRUD between 1995 and at the end of the twentieth century, leaving vulnerabilities to then ascendant Al-Qaeda as the only concern.[2] However, from 2021 and partly with the civil war in Northern Ethiopia expanding to the Afar region of Ethiopia, a rise in Afar nationalism may have re-ignited the rebirth of FRUD. An attack on Djibouti troops in October 2022 was blamed on a splinter group of FRUD.

Separately, Djibouti's military participation in the regionally based African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its hosting of French and US military bases make it an aspirational (and indeed a declared) target for Al-Shabaab militants.[3] The last attack by Al-Shabaab in Djibouti in 2014 targeted a restaurant frequented by foreigners and resulted in 1 death and several injuries.[4] However, the group has limited access to local support networks needed to evade the security services during the planning and preparation phases. However, as Djibouti and Somalia share a common border, there is the ever-present risk of a spillover of terrorist activities into the country. The vulnerability to Al-Shabaab attacks is an ever-present reality for Djibouti, the risk growing and reducing in tandem with the security situation in Somalia.[5] Incidentally, the influx of Yemeni refugees to Djibouti has not resulted in a perceptible increase in Yemeni based threat to Djibouti despite the presence of Al-Qaeda in Yemen.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia's vulnerability to terrorism is linked to the state of stability internally and, by a large degree, to the state of relations and stability with neighbouring Somalia and Eritrea. The collapse of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia in the early 90s and the subsequent collapse of the

[2] Hiiraan Online. (2022, October 14). Djibouti designates Afar rebel group as a terrorist organization. Retrieved from Hiiraan Online: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2022/Oct/188239/djibouti_designates_afar_rebel_group_as_a_.

[3] Shay, S. (2021). Djibouti the next target of al-Shabaab. Tel Aviv: International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

[4] US Department of State. (2014). Country Reports: Africa Overview. Retrieved from US Department of State: Bureau of Counterterrorism: https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239404.htm.

[5] Shay, S. (2021). Djibouti the next target of al-Shabaab. Tel Aviv: International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

Somali state led to the rise of groups such al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI), which was inspired by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.[6] The AIAI sought to recreate an ideologically inclined state as a reaction to the decadence of the secular dictatorship of the Siad Barre State. The group attracted and inspired sympathizers from restive regions in Ethiopia resulting in the establishment of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), an armed separatist group that was accused of launching attacks on soft targets such as hotels and public installations.[7]

The Al-Ittihad also attacked military bases on the border with Ethiopia as its inspired progeny, ONLF also conducted attacks in Ethiopia. The rise of the Union of Islamic Courts, their direct threat to attack Ethiopia and the Ethiopian response with an expeditionary force into Somalia and Mogadishu heightened the terrorist threats to Ethiopia by militants who later coalesced under the name Al-Shabaab and swore allegiance to Al-Qaeda. Between 2007 and 2019, there were 97 incidents of terrorism linked to Al-Shabaab which resulted in 621 deaths in the country including a 2019 incident in Metekel district in which 37 people lost their lives.[8]

In addition to the evolution of AIAI into Al-Shabaab, its threats to Ethiopia alongside Ethiopia's border dispute with Eritrea, there emerged other domestic groups, reportedly supported by the State of Eritrea and designated as terrorist in Ethiopia.[9] These groups, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the ONLF and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO) however lost their terrorist designation and returned to the country as part of the reform process that began in 2018.

Ethiopia has a robust anti-terrorism legislation and policy framework that is regularly updated to incorporate emerging threats. Critics have accused the Government of Ethiopia of abusing these laws to stifle

[6] Shinn, D. H. (2005). Ethiopia: Governance and Terrorism. In R. I. Rotberg, Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa (pp. 93–118). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

[7] Belay, G. F. (2013). A Review of Ethiopia's Security Challenges in The Horn of Africa. Carlisle Barracks, USA: U.S Army War College.

[8] EPO. (2022, November 29). Metekel Conflict. Retrieved from Ethiopia Peace Observatory: https://epo.acleddata.com/metekel-conflict/

[9] Veen, E. v. (2016). Perpetuating power: Ethiopia's political settlement and the organization of security. The Hague: Clingendael Institute.

political plurality but these accusations have diminished with the 2018 revolution.[10]

Kenya

Open source analysis indicates that Kenya has suffered 321 attacks in the eight years between 2010 and 2018, with 43 major attacks (which we define as those with fatalities of more than five souls). Of the 43 attacks identified as major, only one was not directly attributable to Al-Shabaab and was not claimed by Al-Shabaab. By implication, 98% of the attacks were perpetuated by Al-Shabaab fighters. The attacks are largely in the counties sharing a boundary with Somalia. In about 65% of these attacks, civilians or civilian institutions were targeted.

In response to almost all attacks, Al-Shabaab issued statements assuming responsibility, often with the intention of controlling the narrative, raising the group's profile, recruitment, boosting the morale of fighters and fundraising.[11] The statements that serve internal and external propaganda purposes have sought to justify attacks as retribution for the presence of Kenya's military in Somalia, or for the alleged maltreatment of Muslims in Kenya.

In 2014, after Al-Shabaab had attacked a civilian bus and murdered 28 non-muslims, "Sheikh Alli Dheere" justified the attacks as follows: "They invaded the Muslim land of Somalia … it's our duty to take revenge".[12] As the attack on Westgate mall was continuing, Al-Shabaab posted in one of its accounts: "For long we have waged war against the Kenyans in our land, now it's time to shift the battleground and take the war to their land", framing the attacks in Kenya as an extension of the military

[10] U.S Department of State. (2020, November 13). Country Reports on Terrorism 2020: Ethiopia. Retrieved from U.S Department of State: https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/ethiopia/

[11] Cannon, B. J., & Pkalya, D. R. (2017). Why al-Shabaab Attacks Kenya: Questioning the Narrative Paradigm. Terrorism and Political Violence, XXXI (4), 836–852.

[12] Al Jazeera. (2014, November 23). Al-Shabab massacres 28 Kenyan bus passengers. Retrieved from Al Jazeera: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2014/11/23/al-shabab-massacres-28-kenyan-bus-passengers.

engagements between AMISOM (Kenyan contingent included) and Al-Shabaab.[13]

Kenya's vulnerability to terrorism is thus principally linked to a Somalia-based actor- Al-Shabaab, an affiliate of Al-Qaeda. There are indications of the presence of the Islamic State sympathizers in the realm but these do not yet pose sufficient threat to warrant mention beyond the fact of their existence. As an affiliate of Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab receives "ideological support, expertise and training as well as, sometimes, money from the global movement, particularly its Yemen branch".[14] It is estimated that approximately 400 Kenyan nationals were recruited into Al-Shabaab as foreign fighters.[15] An analysis of attacks by Al-Shabaab suggests that violent attacks by Al-Shabaab in Kenya have been on the decline, but with no corresponding decline in fatalities, suggesting a strategic shift to "fewer but more consequential attacks". This indicates a group, not in decline, but one quickly adapting and evolving into a highly effective terrorist organization that continues to pose a big threat to Kenya.

Kenya joined in on the global consensus, committing to deny safe haven to terrorism, and to bring all terrorists to justice. This commitment finds anchorage in Kenya's rule of law dispensation which has historically subjected terrorist actors to criminal justice processes including prosecution.[16] The 2010 constitutional dispensation strengthened this position, obligating Kenya to implement international obligations, including the UN counter-terrorism instruments which call for the prosecution (on sufficiently serious offences) or extradition of terrorist suspects.[17]

Since the terrorist attack on the Embassy of the United States in Nairobi, Kenya, more than 200 suspects have been committed to court

[13] Blair, E., & Lough, R. (2013, September 21). Islamists claim gun attack on Nairobi mall, at least 39 dead. Retrieved from Reuters: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-attack-idUKBRE98K03V20130921.

[14] Bacon, T., & Muibu, D. (2018). Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab: A Resilient Alliance Get access Arrow. In M. Keating, & M. Waldman, War and Peace in Somalia: National Grievances, Local Conflict and Al-Shabaab. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[15] Yusuf, M. (2021, June 26). Fewer Kenyan Youths Joining al-Shabab. Retrieved from VOA: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_fewer-kenyan-youths-joining-al-shabab/6207483.html.

[16] Musau, S. (2018). Combating terrorism and upholding human rights in Kenya. Mowbray, Cape Town: African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF).

[17] Republic of Kenya. (2010). Constitution of Kenya. Nairobi: the National Council for Law Reporting.

for trial on charges linked to terrorism. They have been prosecuted in the magistrates' courts with offences under the penal code, offences under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and in some cases for offences under other relevant statutes like the Firearms Act, the Immigration Act and the Registrations of Persons Act.[18] Whenever the law required it, suspects have been charged in the high court. The doctrine of prosecute or extradite, in relation to terrorism cases, is thus well entrenched in both policy and practice, with a clear bias towards prosecution of suspects. In the two decades in question, less than 10 persons have been extradited to other jurisdictions for trial.

Kenya has also developed and launched a National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE). The NSCVE supports Kenya's broader counter-terrorism efforts by adding the critical dimensions of preventing, countering and reversing radicalisation and engaging the public so that every Kenyan, and every community, resists violent extremism.[19]

In response to increased incursions into Kenyan territory by Al-Shabaab terrorists based in Somalia, Kenya invoked Article 51 of the United Nations Charter in "the right to self defence" in early October 2011 and engaged in pursuit of Al-Shabaab into Somali territory with the concurrence of the Transitional Federal Government.[20] In 2013, having achieved its mission, Kenyan troops were "re-hatted" and were deployed to serve under as part of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) under a UN Security Council's peace enforcement mandate.[21] In peace enforcement, AMISOM troops' mission is to deny safe haven to Al-Qaeda affiliate, Al-Shabaab including by degrading the capabilities of Al-Shabaab. Kenyan troops are also deployed along the Kenya Somali border in support of police border security duties.[22] This is

[18] Ibid. 16.

[19] Government of Kenya. (2016). National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism. Nairobi: Government of Kenya.

[20] Hughes, E. (2012). In (Hot) Pursuit of Justice? The Legality of Kenyan Military Operations in Somalia. African Journal of International and Comparative Law, 20(3), 471–482.

[21] Olsen, G. R. (2018, February 18). What Kenya has to show for sending troops into Somalia seven years ago. Retrieved from The Conversation: https://theconversation.com/what-kenya-has-to-show-for-sending-troops-into-somalia-seven-years-ago-90965.

[22] Muraya, J. (2016, October 15). More KDF Soldiers to Be Deployed Along Kenya-Somalia Border. Retrieved from CapitalFm: https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2016/10/more-kdf-soldiers-to-be-deployed-along-kenya-somalia-border/

a consequence of the frequent cross-border incursions by Al-Shabaab militants into Kenya and their deployment of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), landmines, roadside bombs, small arms and even mortars against police and civilian targets on Kenyan territory.

Somalia

The violent collapse of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 had significant implications for Somalia and the Horn of Africa.[23] Siad Barre had presided over an authoritarian regime, which had morphed towards the end, into a cult of personality with unquestioned power excesses known as *sultanism*.[24] State collapse occasioned by the fall of the regime ushered in a period of instability, conflict and violence towards the late 1990s and early 2000s. The widespread poverty and environmental degradation characterized by frequent droughts further destabilized Somalia and the Horn of Africa.[25] Terror organizations from both within and beyond the Horn region took advantage of this state of affairs to establish a base for terror operations in Somalia.[26] The Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI), a militant Salafi group, was the first recognizable group that adopted terror tactics (including in Ethiopia), to establish.[27] A slow evolution from AIAI, to the Union of Islamic Courts, to Al-Shabaab, to Al-Qaeda and the inevitable emergence of splinter groups (including ISIS from Al-Shabaab) has transformed Somalia into a melting pot of nationalist and international terror groups.

Furthermore, Al-Shabaab has been responsible for thousands of deaths in both Somalia and the neighbouring countries. In the 2 decades of the twenty-first century, Somalia lost over 7,000 people to terror attacks that

[23] Rotberg, R. I. (2003). State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror (1st ed.). Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press and the World Peace Foundation (January 31).

[24] Compagnon, D. (1992). Political decay in Somalia: From Personal Rule to Warlordism. Refuge, XII (5), 8–10.

[25] Ramadane, Z. O. (2014). Somalia: State Failure, Poverty and Terrorism. Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, VI (7), 13–16.

[26] Dagne, T. (2002). Africa and the War on Terrorism. Washington, D.C: Congressional Research Service - The Library of Congress.

[27] Klobucista, C., Masters, J., & Sergie, M. A. (2021). Al-Shabaab. Retrieved November 10, 2022, from https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab.

can be blamed largely on Al-Shabaab.[28] Latest figures suggest a decline in the number of fatalities compared to earlier figures in the decade but attacks by Al-Shabaab still persist. Al-Shabaab is innovative and adaptive, quickly changing leadership command and control structures when drone attacks decimated their top leadership, and itself picking up drones for offensive and surveillance purposes. The continued resilience and adaptivity of the Al-Shabaab means the threat it poses is not diminishing.

Aside from Al-Shabaab, the Daesh or Islamic State affiliates also operate in Somalia.[29] The Daesh in Somalia is primarily made up of Al-Shabaab defectors making for intense rivalry and violent engagements between the two. Together with Mozambique and the DRC, Daesh's geographical spread illustrates its growing prominence in terror circles.

Uganda

Terrorism in Uganda has a long and calamitous history. Post-independence political contestations led first to an unofficial reign of terror in which more than 300,000 Ugandans were killed under the reign of President Idi Amin Dada. This gave way to over twenty years of insurgency by the "Lord's Resistance Army", a group that partly arose from perceptions of post-Amin "collective punishment of the North" and initially formed by the remnants of the vanquished army of Idi Amin.[30] Violence in the Karamoja region, causing and attracting terror, through uncharacterized as terrorism, remains a huge challenge, a factor of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region and providing context for the terrorism challenge in Uganda.[31] Perceptions of marginalization also birthed the ADF with its growth, decline and re-growth. The

[28] Vision of Humanity. (2020). Terrorism in Somalia: Al-Shabaab Continues Deadly Attacks. Retrieved November 09, 2022, from https://www.visionofhumanity.org/country-close-up-terrorism-in-somalia/.

[29] UN-CTED. (2021). Civil society perspectives: ISIL in Africa - Key trends and developments. New York: United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

[30] Ochan, C. (2009). Assessing Uganda's cross-border pursuit of the Lord's Resistance Army. Middlesex County, MA: Tufts University.

[31] Taylor, L. (2022). In Uganda's Karamoja, rampant rustling and a militarised response as violence returns. Retrieved November 16, 2022, from https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2022/1/26/Uganda-Karamoja-cattle-rustling-militarised-violence-returns.

terror threat in Uganda can partly be said, due to its historical linkages to perceptions of marginalization, to be linked to the process of state formation in Uganda. This however excludes the threat from Al-Shabaab.

When Uganda joined AMISOM, terrorism expanded to include the threat from Al-Shabaab. Incidences of terror attacks linked to Al-Shabaab in Uganda were non-existent before Uganda's entry into Somalia as part of the continental peace-keeping force, AMISOM. The first consequential Al-Shabaab attack occurred on 11 July 2010, where 76 people lost their lives while watching finals of the World Cup football match at a recreational facility. Other attacks included the assassination of a Counterterrorism Prosecutor Joan Kagezi.[32] Al-Shabaab, with its Al-Qaeda networks continues to threaten Ugandan troops in Somalia and soft targets in Uganda.

Though originating in post-independence perceptions of marginalization, the ADF in Uganda experienced a lull for a period of time before geo-political contestations in the region saw its rebirth. Subsequently, the ADF deployed its base in North Kivu on the western slopes of the Ruwenzoris to stage attacks against Uganda, amid suspicions that it was a proxy tool of inter-state proxy conflicts.[33] The group claimed responsibility for at least two suicide attacks in Kampala, Uganda in 2021 as well as attempted assassinations.[34] The ADF, allied with the Islamic State since at least 2019 as Islamic State Central Africa Province, has used the conflict in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as cover from which disaffected youths are recruited to carry out suicide bomb attacks on soft targets.[35] The threat of ADF has seen the Ugandan government deploy its troops to eastern DRC, with the permission of the DRC government, to dislodge the terrorists. The ADF also allied itself to

[32] Mutaizibwa, E., & Musisi, F. (2022, June 06). Could suspect in Joan Kagezi killing be hiding in Europe? Retrieved from Monitor: https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/could-suspect-in-joan-kagezi-killing-be-hiding-in-europe--3817256.

[33] Jamestown Foundation. (2015). The Rise of ADF-NALU in Central Africa and Its Connections with al-Shabaab. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from https://www.refworld.org/docid/54b642a14.html.

[34] Davis, S. S. (2021). Uganda and Congo are at War with the Islamic State. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/11/29/congo-isis-uganda-adf-terrorism-islamic-state-museveni/

[35] UN-CTED. (2021). Civil society perspectives: ISIL in Africa - Key trends and developments. New York: United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

Dawson and gave Daesh/ISIS strategic depth in Uganda while receiving global recognition and transfer of skills. So far, the Daesh constitutes the most serious terrorist threat to Uganda today.

South Sudan

South Sudan is Africa's and indeed the world's youngest country. Despite facing incredible amounts of violence linked to domestic identity politics, conventional terrorist organizations have not established a visible foothold in South Sudan and no attacks have been linked to terrorist groups founded on religious extremism.[36] However, there are indications of Al-Qaeda affiliates scouting for recruits in South Sudan in the immediate aftermath of independence in 2011, seeking to assess it for use as a resting and logistics centre. The internal conflict in South Sudan shortly thereafter may have made the country an "unsafe" safe haven. Notwithstanding, there are reports of attempts at recruiting some vulnerable nationals of South Sudan into the ranks of Al-Shabaab but there has been no indication of success at the beginning of the third decade of the twenty-first century.

Tanzania

Tanzania is considered one of Africa's more stable countries. It is characterized by peaceful transfers of power and better-than-average ethnic coexistence, with the threat of terror and religious extremist attacks being markedly lower than in the neighbouring states. Nevertheless, the country suffered more than two dozen terror attacks in the second decade of the twenty-first century which included acid attacks on perceived moderate Muslim clerics.[37] The most lethal terror attack was perpetrated by an Al-Qaida-affiliated cell group in twin attacks on the American embassies

[36] Strachan, A. L. (2019). Extremism, Violent Extremism and Terrorism (EVET) in South Sudan. London: UK Government.

[37] LeSage, A. (2014). The Rising Terrorist Threat in Tanzania: Domestic Islamist Militancy and Regional Threats. Fort McNair, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University.

in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam on 8August 1998.[38] It remains the most devastating terrorist attack in Tanzania's history, having taken the lives of more than 200 people.

Tanzania was formed by the union of Zanzibar islands and mainland then known as Tanganyika. Despite making up a sizable per cent of the overall population, Muslims from the islands have constantly alleged discrimination and marginalization by the mainland Christians. There have been subtle but persistent clarion calls for secession driven by both political and religious leaders. Some religious teachers have ridden on these grievances to advance the course of extremism. They are often linked to Islamic terror groups such as Al-Shabaab.[39] However, it is worth noting that despite the rise in the occurrence of violent extremist incidents, terrorism remains a muzzled subject by the authorities and is generally absent as a topic of concern among the people, in comparison to neighbouring countries such as Kenya.[40] Although there is consensus on "denying infamy and publicity to terrorism" as a way of limiting the spread of their ideology, there is no conclusive study that has assessed the effectiveness of downplaying terrorism as a threat to the country as a means of doing this. There is no evidence that this has worked in Tanzania.

What is clear is that terrorist groups have exploited the existing hush-hush nature of both society and government towards terrorism and religious extremism. Government officials are reluctant to acknowledge the widespread sporadic attacks as terror activities, choosing instead to categorize them as acts of banditry.[41] As mentioned earlier, the country has witnessed a number of religious extremist attacks since 2010. There were sixteen such events in 2013 alone, including three murders of Catholic priests in Zanzibar, burning of churches in both Arusha and Zanzibar, acid attacks on both local people and tourists in Zanzibar,

[38] Counterextremism. (2021). Tanzania: Extremism and Terrorism. Retrieved November 04, 2022, from https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/tanzania-extremism-and-terrorism.

[39] UK Government. (2021). Terrorism in Tanzania. Retrieved November 05, 2022, from https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/tanzania/terrorism.

[40] Dang, L. (2019). Violent Extremism and Community Policing in Tanzania. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

[41] Ibid. 39.

petrol-bomb and hand grenade attacks of churches and tourist spots.[42] In addition, security teams also unearthed cell groups where young men were getting military-style training in Mtwara region.[43] This was nearly a decade before conflict erupted across the border in northern Mozambique. One might argue that terror activities have been moving southward and westwards since attacks began towards the end of the last century.

Recent terror attacks in the restive northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado have spilled over into the southern region of Tanzania. In October 2020, the terror group launched attacks across the Ruvuma in Mtwara region, where they killed about 20 people, including security personnel, besides looting shops and homes, burning cars and government buildings.[44] The attacks also appear targeted at western interests particularly in the nascent oil and gas industry. It is instructive that Tanzania's natural gas deposits lie directly north of those of Mozambique.

Sudan

Sudan's designation as a "state sponsor" of terrorism by the US government as well as its historical and ideological linkages with groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Abdl Nidal Organization and even with Al-Qaeda through alliance with its founder Osama Bin Laden has meant that post the 1989 Islamic revolution, Sudan had a complex manifestation of terrorism, with the administration treating the accusations as inherently political.[45] This notwithstanding, Sudan's neighbouring countries alongside the United States and her western allies remain wary of Sudan.

In the 1989 revolution, the government of Hassan al-Turabi under the National Islamic Front, came to power and went ahead to extend an invitation to Osama bin Laden to establish al-Qaeda's presence in the

[42] Ibid. 40.

[43] US Department of State. (2020). Country Reports on Terrorism 2020: Tanzania. Retrieved November 05, 2022, from https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/tanzania/.

[44] Ibid. 44.

[45] US State Department. (2019). Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Sudan. Retrieved November 24, 2022, from https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/sudan/.

country.[46] Sudan subsequently hosted Bin Laden for close to a decade, and only expelled him upon pressure from the United States and Saudi Arabia. Sudan gave Al-Qaeda an enabling environment to thrive, having at one point up to 1,500 fighters based in the country.[47] Bin Laden also established some 30 businesses in all sectors of the economy, going as far as jointly establishing a profitable bank named al-Shimal with al-Turabi himself. The Government of Sudan did not consider its visitors as "terrorists" but had to do so upon global pressure, best expressed in the sustained economic sanctions from the United States. Consequently, following the mass uprising of 2019 in Sudan, elements of Hamas, Hezbollah and El-Gamaa al-Islamiyya were expelled from Sudan, thereby ending almost three decades of partnerships, and allowing for better relations with the west, including most radically, a rapprochement with Israel.[48]

The Sudan assesses that in the medium term, its vulnerability to terrorist attacks will likely be the result of her normalization of relations with Israel. It is expected that as a result of said normalization, many extremists may emerge and will be supported by many extremist cadres existing in the region, such as Al-Shabaab or Ansar Al-Sharia group or others.[49] There is also concern that extremists, motivated by perceived loss of power by religious conservatives, may wage war against the Sudanese state.[50] These ideologues have sponsored attacks on soft targets including government offices and residential areas in Khartoum. The prevailing political turmoil brought on by the 2019 coup is conducive for enhanced actions by the aforementioned ideological conservatives. Reports indicate that Daesh is aligned or hiding with the conservatives,

[46] Shinn, D. H. (2007). Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn. Washington, D.C: The George Washington University.

[47] Ibid. 47.

[48] Weinthal, B. (2019, December 16). Sudan will close office of terrorist groups Hezbollah, Hamas. Retrieved from The Jerusalem Post: https://www.jpost.com/international/sudan-will-close-office-of-terrorist-groups-hezbollah-hamas-611050.

[49] Feltman, J., & Knoft, P. (2020). Normalizing Sudan-Israel relations now is a dangerous game. Retrieved November 26, 2022, from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/09/24/normalizing-sudan-israel-relations-now-is-a-dangerous-game/.

[50] Weiss, C. (2022). Analysis: Al Qaeda ideologue calls for jihad in Sudan, provides guidelines. Retrieved October 27, 2022, from https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/10/analysis-al-qaeda-ideologue-calls-for-jihad-in-sudan-provides-guidelines.php.

and has been responsible for three attacks since 2019, including the attempted assassination of Sudan's transitional Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok.

Profile of Terrorist Organizations in East Africa

The East and Horn of Africa region is both a source and victim of terrorism. The manifestation of terrorism in the greater East Africa region allows for the identification of a profile that defines the actors. Some of the elements that constitute the character of terrorism in the greater East African region are identified below.

Threat of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State

The presence of elements of Daesh and Al-Qaeda-linked Al Shabab constitutes great threats to the greater East African region. Their strategic depth, presence and activity in each country vary, with Daesh clearly in establishment stages in most countries while Al-Shabaab is resilient in many others. Ideologically indistinguishable, the tracking of Al-Shabaab and Daesh networks must continue to inform counter-terrorism efforts in the region.

The continued instabilities and weak state structure in Somalia have provided a safe haven for Al-Qaeda through Al-Shabaab and splinter group ISIS to set up base and expand to the region.[51] Indeed, ISIS, under the caption of Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), has Somalia as its hub.[52] The conflict in eastern DRC has provided fertile ground for growth of the ADF while political conflicts in Ethiopia and Sudan have seen the establishment of ISIS sympathizers in Khartoum and ethnic nationalist terrorist groups (such as OLF-Shene) in Ethiopia.[53] Indeed, the conflict in Ethiopia resulted in the first concerted Al-Shabaab attacks in Ethiopia in over 2 decades. The continuing conflict in South Sudan in the meantime is encouraging the attempt at recruitment of South

[51] Webber, L., & Garofalo, D. (2023). The Islamic State Somalia Propaganda Coalition's Regional Language Push. CTC Sentinel, XIV(IV), 23–34.

[52] Ibid. 51.

[53] Stupart, J., & Lukhele, S. (2014). The Ugandan-spawned rebel group in the eastern DRC. Africa Conflict Monthly Monitor, 2014(4), 34–42.

Sudanese to Al-Shabaab.[54] Conflicts in the regions are either grounded on grievances or result in grievances, which are then tactfully exploited by the terror organizations. The grievances will usually be about structural issues of poverty, unemployment and governance deficits.[55] The incentive to young people to become part of "the solution" in a bitter conflict environment is a powerful pull. The clear nexus between internal conflict and presence of terror groups thus cannot be denied.

The Daesh gained a foothold in the region through Al-Shabaab splinter groups in Somalia. The rivalry between the two is driving increased recruitment for both groups and increased attacks in a desire to upend each other. Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab and Daesh are connected at foundation level, and therefore ideologically aligned.[56] Both Al-Shabaab and Daesh have at various times worked with ADF, with ADF initially partnering with Al-Shabaab but currently owing allegiance to Daesh. The networking between the terror organizations allows for the geographical spread, and the concurrent spread of skills, tactics and ideology.

Furthermore, Al-Shabaab militants in Mozambique express the same ideology and use the same terror tactics as those in Mogadishu and also similar to ADF tactics in its attacks in Uganda. The terrorists learn from and inspire each other. Indeed, ideological books emanating from Al-Shabaab have been found with Boko Haram in West Africa, indicating continental wide linkages.

A United Nations security report in 2021 observed that the Al-Shabaab had deployed drones for reconnaissance purposes against security forces, with the prediction that it would not be long before they deploy

[54] European Eye on Radicalization Editorial. (2023, April 19). Sudan on the Brink: The Prospect of Terrorists Exploiting the Current Instability. Retrieved from European Eye on Radicalization: https://eeradicalization.com/sudan-on-the-brink-the-prospect-of-terrorists-exploiting-the-current-instability/.

[55] Pillai, V., & de Corral, M. (2022, November 15). Tackling fragility and promoting integration in the Horn of Africa through 'development diplomacy'. Retrieved from The Brookings Institution: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/11/15/tackling-fragility-and-promoting-integration-in-the-horn-of-africa-through-development-diplomacy/.

[56] International Crisis Group. (2016). Exploiting Disorder: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. London: International Crisis Group.

armed drones.[57] The Al-Shabaab have also shown innovation and ingenuity in procuring weapons, including man-portable air defence systems and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs).[58] It has also been particularly adept at exploiting information technology for recruitment and propaganda as well as re-organizing its command and control structures even in the midst of constant losses at leadership level.[59] This speaks to the resilience and the ability to adapt which the Al-Shabaab possess and manifest. It is speculated that these adaptation skills could and would be spread to other terror organizations. The result of adaptability by Al-Shabaab is the contradiction of fewer attacks with higher number of casualties, to wit, more efficient terrorism.[60]

This adaptability is not visible only with Al-Shabaab. The Islamic State exhibits this ability in attracting the affiliation of ADF. Similarly, the LRA continuously evades annihilation by the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) and her allies in various theatres of operation across countries.[61] This is further demonstrated by the complete disappearance of its leader Joseph Kony despite the over 10 million dollars in bounty money placed on him by the US government, which illustrates the universality of adaptability.[62] Incidentally, these terror organizations have no qualms "evolving" their ideology in adapting to new situations or environments.

In the 90s, Al-Qaeda used Sudan as a logistics hub, engaging in business to raise money for its operations, in recruitment and in smuggling weapons to the Middle East.[63] In 2012, Al-Shabaab scouted South Sudan

[57] UN Security Council. (2021). Security Council Report. New York: UN Security Council.

[58] Ibid. 57.

[59] Karasik, T. (2022, September 11). Containing Al-Shabab's technology leaps key to terror fight. Retrieved from Arab News: https://www.arabnews.com/node/2160561#:~:text=It%20has%20used%20chat%20rooms,in%20i.

[60] Menkhaus, K. (2014). Al-Shabaab and Social Media: A double-edged sword. The Brown Journal of World Affairs, XX (2), 309–327.

[61] Ochan, C. (2009). Assessing Uganda's cross-border pursuit of the Lord's Resistance Army. Middlesex County, MA: Tufts University.

[62] Jjuuko, D., & Kirabira, T. R. (2023, March 5). Who is Joseph Kony? The altar boy who became Africa's most wanted man. Retrieved from The Conversation: https://theconversation.com/who-is-joseph-kony-the-altar-boy-who-became-africas-most-wanted-man-200361.

[63] Shinn, D. H. (2007). Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn. Washington, D.C: The George Washington University.

as a possible logistics hub. Several UN monitoring reports have accused Al-Shabaab of engaging in illegal charcoal trade in Somalia and poaching in Kenya to finance its operations.[64] In addition, the Al-Shabaab's operations in Mozambique and ADF/Islamic State operations in eastern DRC are partly funded by illegal artisanal mining.[65] All terror groups, also engage in extortion, the most documented cases being with Al-Shabaab. In all these "business" enterprises, terror organizations in the region engage at various times in money laundering, human trafficking, arms smuggling and commodity smuggling, establishing networks and working partnerships with criminal organizations engaged in those activities.[66]

Impact of Regional Megatrends on Terrorism

In the decades to come, the greater East Africa region could experience changes that would define terrorism and counter-terrorism trends. The region will experience high population growth with a majority of the population being young people below the age of 25 years.[67] Most of these youths will likely be unemployed or underemployed in "gig" economies (short-term contracts as freelance employees as opposed to permanent jobs) and will be highly literate, irreverent, connected and urban.[68] Most of the population will be urban and the region will start dealing with poorly governed mega cities.[69] This is all in the paradox of bigger economies, resulting therefore in bigger, more demanding middle classes and high-income inequalities. These indices all pull towards one

[64] Keatinge, T. (2014). The role of finance in defeating Al-Shabaab. London: Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall.

[65] Merwe, T. v. (2017). Resource Extraction and Violent Extremism in Africa. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs.

[66] Klobucista, C., Masters, J., & Sergie, M. A. (2021). Al-Shabab. Retrieved November 10, 2022, from https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab.

[67] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2022). World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results. New York: UN DESA/POP/2022/TR/NO.3.

[68] Banik, N., & Padalkar, M. (2021). The spread of Gig Economy: Trends and Effects. Foresight and STI Governance, XV (1), 19–25.

[69] Pandey, A. K., & Kundu, D. (2020). World urbanisation: Trends and patterns. In M. Kinyanjui, R. Sietchiping, & D. Kundu, Developing National Urban Policies (pp. 13–49). Singapore: Springer.

direction, a perfect storm, a region more conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

In this environment, terrorism is likely to be a growth industry with the above manifestations enhanced. In particular, the increased use of technology, including artificial intelligence and block chain technology in all phases of terrorism is to be expected. The exploitation of the dark web, including current and newer forms of digital money by current terrorists constitutes another indicator.[70] Furthermore, the recruitment and training in the metaverse will likely gain currency and allow for greater reach by terrorist actors. Other variables such as growing grievances around social injustices, income inequality, unemployment and identity issues will continue to be baited by terrorist recruiters; with no shortage of vulnerable youth in poorly governed and less socially cohesive mega cities.

Conclusion

Terrorism in East Africa and the Horn continues to be a most consequential threat. It is neither in stagnation nor in decline. Efforts to counter the same must continue at the same or higher intensity. However, regional counter-terrorism institutions will not need to reinvent the wheel. Adaptation and innovation in building and enhancing institutional capacities, countering the spread of violent extremism and enhancing inter-agency collaboration and cross-border cooperation will continue to be key tools. However, there will be need for enhanced focus on social protection. Member states will have to invest in social protection tools which target the youth such as universal basic income and continuous upgrading of skills to ensure that the next generation is not lost to terrorism.

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CHAPTER 7

Djibouti and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa

Hassan Abdullahi Guhad

Introduction

Terrorism threat in Djibouti does not originate from within its borders but from the regional dynamics and its neighboring states with presence of terrorist organizations in the Gulf and the Horn of Africa regions.[1] Djibouti is sandwiched between Somalia and Yemen that are rated as highly impacted countries by the 2020 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) ranking them at positions five and six respectively.[2] This same GTI report ranked Djibouti at position 130. The GTI ranks countries in descending order according to the impact of terrorism where position 1 represents

[1] Bereketeab, R. (2016). Djibouti: strategic location, an asset or a curse? *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, *3*(1), 5–18.

[2] "Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism", ReliefWeb, June 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2020-measuring-impact-terrorism.

H. A. Guhad (✉)
Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: hassandhidho@gmail.com

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the most impacted country hence Djibouti is considered as a very low impacted country by terrorism.[3]

The foregoing notwithstanding, Djibouti stands in the crossroads for terrorism threats due to its geo-strategic significance and foreign troops presence as argued by Professor Musambayi Katumanga who is a security expert and lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Nairobi:

> By playing the dynamics of inclusive area access, Djibouti is able to benefit from America's geostrategic interest, China's security driven geo-economic interest, and French geopolitical and geostrategic interests. The convergence of these dynamics and sometimes contradicting interests have transformed Djibouti into a high value target for terrorist groups. (Professor Musambayi Katumanga, December 4, 2021)[4]

Djibouti is located in the Horn of Africa region and it borders the Suez Canal in Egypt, the country is also between two highly conflicted regions, notably the Horn of Africa and Gulf region, which in security perspective, harnesses its global strategic significance.[5] However, this significance has increased after the 9/11 US attack partly because of its strategic location as a regional hub and a point of transit for the terrorist groups as they execute their activities.[6] By the year 2001, the United States considered the Horn of Africa region (HOA) as a major source of terrorism.[7] For instance, a number of terrorist attacks that took place in the Horn of Africa include the US embassy bombing in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 that killed over 200 people and injured more than 4,000.[8] In November 2002, further Al-Qaeda-linked terrorists attacked a hotel and attempted

[3] Ibid.

[4] Katumanga M. (2021, December 4). Personal interview (face to face in Nairobi Kenya).

[5] Bereketeab, R. (2016). Djibouti: strategic location, an asset or a curse? *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, *3*(1), 5–18.

[6] Honan, Edith. "United States Calls on Djibouti to Show Restraint ahead of Vote." EIN Newsdesk, 24 December 2015.

[7] Docking, T., & Menkhaus, K. J. (2004). *Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Vol. 113). United States Institute of Peace.

[8] Ibid.

to shoot down an Israel-owned airline near the Kenyan coastal town of Mombasa.[9]

Djibouti neighbors these countries in the region and stands in such a strategic junction. Perhaps this explains why the Combined Joint Task Force command center in the Horn of Africa region (CJTF-HOA) was established in Djibouti. This led into a paradigm shift whereby Djibouti was preferred as a base for the fight against terrorist groups while the terrorist groups considered Djibouti a major target for transnational terrorism.[10]

This chapter discusses Djibouti's geo-strategic significance to terrorism and counterterrorism strategies. It also analyzes the terrorist groups that pose threats in Djibouti and the country's responses to such terrorism threats. The chapter will finally propose recommendations for action as its conclusion.

Djibouti's Geo-Strategic Vulnerability to Terrorism

In explaining Djibouti's geo-strategic significance to the terrorist organizations, Professor Musambayi Katumanga declared unequivocally that "where there is an antelope, there is a lion. Al-Qaeda considers Djibouti a high-value target due to the foreign military presence".[11] Djibouti's significance derives from its transit capability as opposed to its potentiality as a base to international terrorist groups.[12] This underscores the fact that the only terrorism incident that occurred in Djibouti since the establishment of the US African Command base is the May 2014 terror attack perpetrated by the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab terrorist group.[13]

Djibouti is based on a system of neo-patrimonialism with three main revenue-generating sectors for its survival; the Djibouti Port, the foreign

[9] Ibid.

[10] World Bank. "Djibouti's Economic Outlook—Spring 2016." 2016.

[11] Katumanga M. (2021, December 4). Personal interview by the author (face to face in Nairobi Kenya).

[12] Docking, T., & Menkhaus, K. J. (2004). *Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Vol. 113). United States Institute of Peace.

[13] Djibouti Country Report on Terrorism, 2014. Available at https://www.refworld.org/docid/5587c7534f.html.

military bases, and its relationship with Ethiopia.[14] However, by hosting US and Western European troops, Djibouti offers a Western-related high-value target for international terrorists.[15] The foregoing notwithstanding, as a state, it relies on rents received through the aforementioned sectors.[16] Professor Musambayi Katumanga who is a security expert and lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Nairobi contends that "Djibouti has a leadership with a strategic culture that allows it to build on its geographical location, which overtime, it has converted into a strategic junction".[17] Katumanga argues that this strategic junction allows global-regional intersections that are well-managed by the elites. Djibouti relies heavily on donors through selling its international resources. The major economic activity in Djibouti is its position as transportation hub of goods and services through its port in the Horn of African region.[18] The Horn of Africa countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, and Somalia) and Yemen share a common terrorism threat.[19] Western and local forces have intercepted smuggled weapons suspected to be heading to Houthi in Yemen and Somalia's Al-Shabab in the Indian Ocean coast making the littoral states of Djibouti, Yemen, and Somalia likely transit and destination countries for terrorists and their weapons.[20] Since 2013, UN experts have voiced concerns to the Security Council about a flow of weapons from Yemen and Iran into Somalia.[21] The map below shows the interconnected nature of the Horn of Africa and likely smuggling routes along the strategic littoral states.

[14] Borowicz, J. (2017). *Strategic Location and Neo-patrimonialism in Djibouti* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas).

[15] Hotel, H., & Ababa, A. (2008). Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy In East Africa (IGAD Region) Œ Building National Capacities 4–5 March 2008.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Katumanga M. (2021, December 4). Personal interview by the author (face to face in Nairobi Kenya).

[18] UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1425, March 25, 2003, pp. 31–32.

[19] Rotberg, R. I. (Ed.). (2005). *Battling terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. Brookings Institution Press.

[20] Puntland Post, February 2021: Gulf Rivalries are Spilling into Africa's Horn, https://puntlandpost.net/2021/02/11/gulf-rivalries-are-spilling-into-africas-horn/.

[21] Ibid.

Al Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia, Al-Shabab, has an operational reach and capability that covers all of the Horn of Africa and has been active in the past in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Djibouti.[22] The terrorism threats in Djibouti and the HOA region are because of the interconnected links between the many conflicts in the region.[23]

The Muslim community is the major population in Djibouti comprising more than 99% of the population.[24] Prior to the September 11 attacks in 2001, the United States maintained a very low presence in Djibouti. However, with the August 7, 1998, terrorist attacks on US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York, the United States established its headquarters for the Joint Counter terrorism Task Force in the Horn of Africa, (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti for coordinating all counterterrorism (CT) operations in the region which included air, land and sea operations covering states such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan, Somali, Eritrea, as well as Yemen.[25]

The mission of CJTF-HOA is to prevent the occurrence of terror attacks through detection, disruption, and the defeat of terrorist organizations and their affiliates through identifying the key hideouts of organizations such as the Al-Qaeda, as well as neutralizing their activities in the region while giving foreign material support to state institutions which are fighting terrorism in consultations with partner countries.[26] The presence of many foreign troops with state-of-the-art military assets over this small country contributed to many counterterrorism engagements to succeed in deterring the spread of terrorism in Djibouti.

Since the inception of the CJTF-HOA, a major terrorist attack has only occurred once in Djibouti on May 24, 2014, whereby a restaurant was attacked by two suicide bombers of Somali origin killing a Turkish

[22] Ibid.

[23] "Sudan: Arrival of First US Military Plane Since 1993," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, May 21, 2003.

[24] Kettani, H. (2010). Muslim population in Africa: 1950–2020. *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*, *1*(2), 136.

[25] Gorill Husby, "Islam Gains Ground in East Africa," Jane's Intelligence Review (May 2003), p. 31.

[26] Adam Clymer. "World Survey Says Negative Views of U.S. Are Rising," New York Times, December 5, 2002, p. 22.

citizen and injuring over 20 others.[27] After the attack, al-Shabaab claimed responsibility arguing that it was punishing the country for its contribution of troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and for the Western military presence in the country.[28] Djibouti is one of the troops contributing country (TCC) to AMISOM which is battling Al-Shabab in Somalia.[29]

Djibouti's vulnerability manifested in the release of a 20 minute video by the Al-Shabaab leader in March 2021 inciting the population to rise against Djibouti's government and its foreign troops for allowing the latter to launch attacks from its soil.[30] What seems like a successful propaganda ploy by the terror group elicited responses from the Djibouti presidency and US Africa Command (AFRICOM) headquarters in Djibouti. The Djibouti government on its part issued a press statement in response as shown in Fig. 7.1.[31]

The AFRICOM for its part responded through its spokesperson, Colonel Christopher Karns, who told VOA Somali that:

> The U.S. Africa Command is aware of the recent audio release from al-Shabab calling for attacks on U.S. and French interests in Djibouti… "U.S. Africa Command takes these statements seriously". "Al-Shabab remains a persistent threat to U.S. interests in East Africa. This is why it remains important to apply continued pressure on the Al-Shabab network and isolate the threat it presents to the region and beyond."[32]

Djibouti's geo-strategic location and its homogenous population with the neighboring countries' population with a kin country connection also create an intertwined social fabric which allow easy and unsuspected cross-border movement. Of concern, is the growing regional expansion

[27] Djibouti Country Report on Terrorism, 2014. Available at https://www.refworld.org/docid/5587c7534f.html.

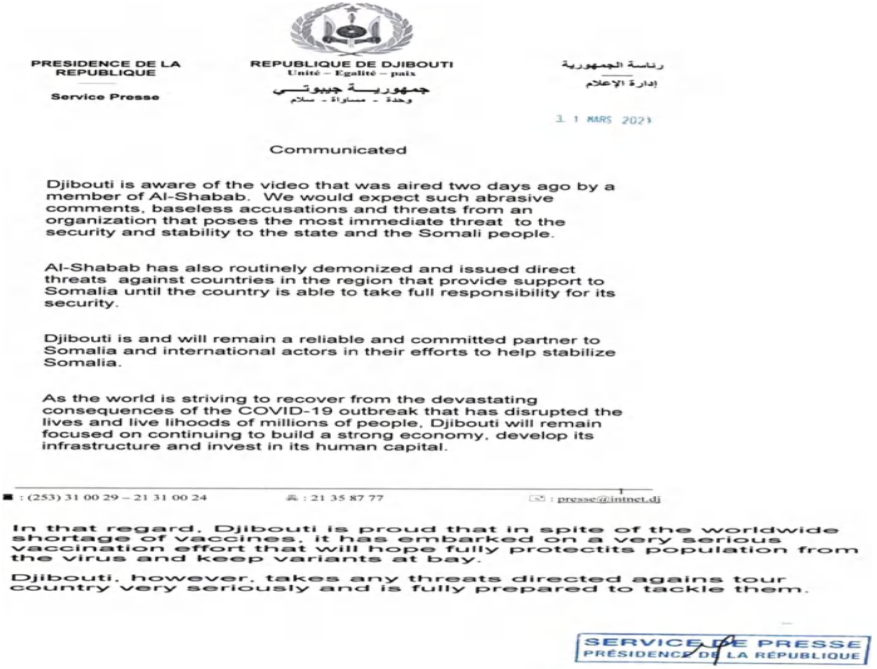
[28] Ibid.

[29] Williams, P. D. (2018). Joining AMISOM: why six African states contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *12*(1), 172–192.

[30] Maruf H. VOA News, March 28, 2021. Available at https://www.voanews.com/africa/al-shabab-issues-threats-ahead-elections-djibouti.

[31] Caasimada Online, April 2, 2021. Available at https://www.caasimada.net/madaxtooyada-jabuuti-oo-jawaab-ka-bixisay-fariintii-uu-soo-diray-amiirka-al-shabaab/.

[32] Ibid.



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جمهورية جيبوتي
وحدة - مساواة - سلام

رئاسة الجمهورية
إدارة الإعلام

31 MARS 2021

Communicated

Djibouti is aware of the video that was aired two days ago by a member of Al-Shabab. We would expect such abrasive comments, baseless accusations and threats from an organization that poses the most immediate threat to the security and stability to the state and the Somali people.

Al-Shabab has also routinely demonized and issued direct threats against countries in the region that provide support to Somalia until the country is able to take full responsibility for its security.

Djibouti is and will remain a reliable and committed partner to Somalia and international actors in their efforts to help stabilize Somalia.

As the world is striving to recover from the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak that has disrupted the lives and live lihoods of millions of people, Djibouti will remain focused on continuing to build a strong economy, develop its infrastructure and invest in its human capital.

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In that regard, Djibouti is proud that in spite of the worldwide shortage of vaccines, it has embarked on a very serious vaccination effort that will hope fully protectits population from the virus and keep variants at bay.

Djibouti, however, takes any threats directed agains tour country very seriously and is fully prepared to tackle them.

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Fig. 7.1 Government of Djibouti communique in response to Al-Shabaab propaganda

of extremists not only in the Horn of Africa but also across Africa. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Islamic State has claimed responsibility for attacks against that country's military. In Mozambique, a similar terror group called by many different names by analysts; such as IS, Al-Shabaab, *Al-Sunnah wal jamaa* has been wreaking havoc. The US AFRICOM's spokesperson said that there are "meaningful ties" between the Islamic State and the Allied Democratic forces rebel group.[33] The proximity of Djibouti to terror-infested areas like in Somalia and its strategic location as a gateway to the HOA and across the continent, positions it at a vulnerable center of contention that terrorists and counter terrorists alike will capitalize on and continue scrambling for.

Illiteracy Level among the Youths

The majority of the population in Djibouti has little access to education and there is a high level of unemployment among the Djibouti youth (2019 UNDP Report). The 2019 UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) notes that Djibouti is ranked 166th out of 189 member states.[34] This 2019 UNDP HDI index has factored in issues such as literacy levels, standards of living, provisions of health care, infrastructural developments, socio-economic, and political developments among others.[35] Ghosh (2016) argues governments focus more on reactive counterterrorism measures but instead recommends governments to include education in their counterterrorism policies as a preventive measure as this makes students resilient citizens.[36]

[33] Foreign Policy.com, May 16, 2019. In Africa All Jihad is Local: The Rush to Link Regional groups to Islamic State Could Make Militancy Worse.

[34] The 2019 UNDP Human Development index (HDI).

[35] UNDP Human Development Index Report (2019) accessed on December 6, 2021. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/DJI.pdf.

[36] Ghosh, R., Chan, W. A., Manuel, A., & Dilimulati, M. (2017). Can education counter violent religious extremism? *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, *23*(2), 117–133.

High Level of Corruption

Corruption has not only increased the levels of misery in Djibouti, but it has also led to relative deprivation.[37] For instance, the country experiences high levels of corruption as the government has adopted a political patronage model.[38] According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) report released by the Transparency International (TI) in 2015, Djibouti managed to score 34 points out of 100 points (CPI 2015 Report). In this case, 0 indicated high levels of corruption while 100 meant zero corruption. Shelley (2004) argues that neither criminal groups nor terrorists fear corrupt and ineffective governments in conflict zones.[39]

Neo-Patrimonialism in Government

Although the people of Djibouti usually conduct their elections every six years, President Ismael Omar Guelleh has been in power since 1999 when he succeeded his uncle Hassan Gouled Aptidon who was also in power since independence in 1977.[40] Despite the existence of opposition, the ruling political party has always remained at the helm, by making formal changes to run again even after the end of the presidential constitutional final term.[41]

However, in terms of political representation, all of the diverse ethnic communities in Djibouti are not well represented in the leadership of the country.[42] It's believed that the president's ethnic community and specifically his clans are the major beneficiaries of his government.[43] This implies that areas dominated by the Afar community are not well represented in

[37] Adam Clymer. "World Survey Says Negative Views of U.S. Are Rising," New York Times, December 5, 2002, p. 22.

[38] Styan, D. (2016). Djibouti: small state strategy at a crossroads. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, *1*(1), 79–91.

[39] Shelley, L. (2004). The unholy trinity: transnational crime, corruption, and terrorism. *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, *11*, 101.

[40] Bollee, A. (2003). Djibouti: From French outpost to US base. *Review of African Political Economy*, 481–484.

[41] Tull, D. M., & Simons, C. (2017). The institutionalization of power revisited: presidential term limits in Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, *52*(2), 79–102.

[42] Schraeder, P. J. (1993). Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: from 'eye of the hurricane to boiling cauldron'. *African Affairs*, *92*(367), 203–221.

[43] Ibid.

government. The increased grievances in large numbers of citizens can make the country vulnerable to terrorism.

Persistent Intra-regional Conflicts

The persistence of armed conflicts within the region increases Djibouti's vulnerability to terrorism. The conflicts in neighboring Eritrea, Somalia, and Yemen raise the potential to destabilize Djibouti for the following reasons.[44] First, the number of refugees from neighboring countries has been consistently increasing. For instance, there exists a substantial Somali refugee population estimated to be over 30,000 many of them living in the Ali Addeh and Holl Holl refugee camps, many living there for more than two decades.[45] Second, there also exists the sustained influx of refugees from Yemen fleeing their conflict-torn home country in small boats across the Gulf of Aden to seek refuge in the arid Obock region of Djibouti. In early August 2015, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) reported that approximately 21,726 refugees had arrived from Yemen as of the end of July. An estimated forty-six percent (9,953) were Yemeni nationals, while a further 9,946 were transiting third country nationals and eight percent (1,827) were Djibouti returnees. Third, this increasing inflow of immigrants puts a strain on the country's already limited resources and ability to deliver services and could potentially lead to tensions with local communities that have concerns about possible terrorists hidden among the more recent immigrants from Somalia and Yemen.

Terrorist Groups in Djibouti: Proximity to Hotbed of Terror and Regional Dynamics

Djibouti's vulnerabilities to the risks of terrorism flow significantly from its geo-strategic location in the Horn of Africa where it is surrounded by neighboring countries that have active terrorist groups which continue to

[44] Trading Economics. "Djibouti Unemployment Rate." Ministry of Finance, Djibouti, March 2017.

[45] Ibid.

perpetrate terrorism activities.[46] Specifically, Djibouti is in close proximity to Somalia which is a base for the Al-Shabab terrorist group which has a regional operational capability.[47] It was the Al-Shabaab that carried out the first recorded terrorist attack since the establishment of AFRICOM in Djibouti on May 2014.[48] In addition, the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) which emerged in mid-2015 and is active in the Puntland region of Somalia is also in close proximity to Djibouti.[49] The regional vulnerability of Djibouti to terrorism in East Africa and the Horn is depicted in Fig. 7.2 which shows regional terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabab between 2013 and 2014 in the region.[50]

Djibouti's Counterterrorism Strategies

Djibouti is a beneficiary of wider counterterrorism support provided to Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states by the United States and European Union to enhance judicial mechanisms and promote inter-agency counterterrorism coordination within its member states.[51] The country has adopted a number of counterterrorism strategies as discussed below.

National Government Tight Controls Anchored on Neo-patrimonialism

Given the small size of the nation and its population, the national government has tight control of its operations and control of its communities, which makes it easy for the government to identify potential terrorists. The main source of income of the government of Djibouti comes from

[46] Puntland Post, February 2021: Gulf Rivalries are Spilling into Africa's Horn, https://puntlandpost.net/2021/02/11/gulf-rivalries-are-spilling-into-africas-horn/.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Djibouti Country Report on Terrorism, 2014. Available at https://www.refworld.org/docid/5587c7534f.html.

[49] Warner, J., & Weiss, C. (2017). A legitimate challenger? Assessing the rivalry between al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in Somalia. *CTC Sentinel*, *10*(10), 27–32.

[50] James Miller, "Al-Shabab in East Africa", Critical Threats, July 24, 2014, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/al-shabaab-in-east-africa.

[51] Nte N.D., & Oluka N.L., (2020) Counterterrorism Mechanisms and Trends Analysis in Africa. *Cambodian Journal of International Studies*, 3.

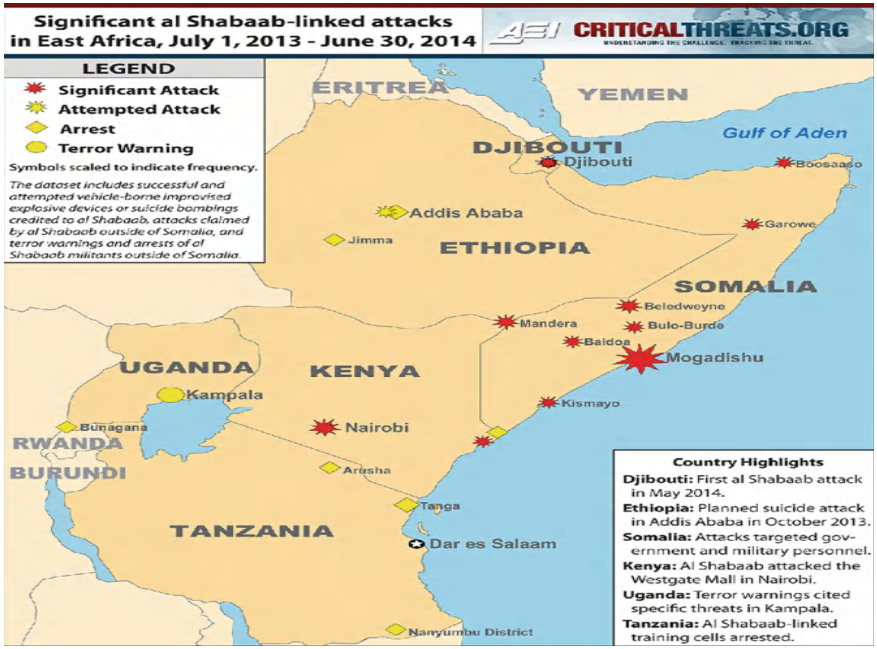

Fig. 7.2 Regional Terrorist Attacks by Al-Shabab, 2013 to 2014 (*Source* Critical Threats, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/al-shabaab-in-east-africa)

the external world through rents. Therefore, there is a mixture of personalized rule accompanied by the legal-rational rule fostering tight state controls.[52]

The law enforcement agencies in Djibouti include the Djibouti National Police (DNP), the National Security Judiciary Police, The Djibouti Coast Guard (DCG), and the Djibouti National Gendarmerie. The major function of the DNP is to protect Djibouti's borders by guarding the country's entry and exit points. The DNP does this by conducting constant border patrols. The Gendarmerie is tasked with providing 24-hour surveillance of major border points. They also guard the international airports and seaports. Despite the fact that the majority of goods and services are shipped in and out of Djibouti, most pedestrians however use road transport through the three main border posts. The busiest border point is Loyoda that crosses into Somalia. Nevertheless, despite active security measures, terrorist acts still occurred in 2014 and raised concerns on the probability for more violent terrorist attacks to be launched in the country.[53] Most of Djibouti's national counterterrorism measures come in the form of law enforcement actions, checkpoints, and border patrol operations.[54]

Foreign Military Geo-Strategic Alliances

The presence of several militaries from China and some Western countries has been described as another reason contributing to the enhancement of Djibouti's security. These militaries protect trade through the port of Djibouti while also dealing with the incidence of piracy at sea. The Republic of Djibouti is being used as a headquarters for counterterrorism operations in the HOA region. For example, Djibouti hosts the Center of Excellence and Counter Messaging in the HOA region. The Center's major goal is to promote countering violent extremism and capacity

[52] Lee, John. "China Comes to Djibouti: Why Washington Should Be Worried." Foreign Affairs, 23 April 2015.

[53] Agence France-Presse. "Tiny Djibouti Thinks Big with a Complex Web of Infrastructure Spending Tied to Ethiopia—and Chinese Credit." Mail & Guardian Africa, 6 April 2016.

[54] Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions. Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson (eds.), (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000).

building initiatives.[55] The members of the Djibouti National Assembly, in conjunction with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs have convened several round table meetings with the young people to promote local sporting activities, supporting trade associations, encouraging the young people to maintain security and live with each other peacefully. However, despite all these efforts and initiatives, the level of youth unemployment is still high, the standard of living of youth is low hence defeating the purpose of the government efforts.

The major interests of the United States of America for the HOA region is to secure trade and sea routes in the Indian Ocean and also to pursue effective counterterrorism measures against the leading terrorist groups such as the Al-Qaeda and the Al-Shabab. Most of these terrorist groups are based in Yemen and Somalia, which neighbor Djibouti. US interests in the region became more focused after the September 11, 2001, attacks. Subsequently, other countries in Europe such as Italy, France, Germany, and Spain have also joined the United States in deploying their militaries as well as China in Djibouti.[56] Japan is also a late entrant in the region. The idea is to stop piracy activities in the Indian Ocean and support the air and sea trade routes in a post-Cold War era.

Geo-Strategic Location Advantage

In addition to Djibouti's important geo-strategic position, its renewable sources of energy are capable of boosting the Djibouti economy in several ways. First, the shipping lanes around Djibouti are some of the busiest in the world and Djibouti is a major refueling hub for ships transiting through Bab-el Mandeb Strait.[57]

Second, many neighboring states, including Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan are landlocked states, so they rely on Djibouti's port for their export and import activities. Therefore, Djibouti takes advantage of this

[55] Benyagoub, Mehdi. Finding New Paths for Growth in Djibouti. World Bank: MENA Knowledge and Learning, no. 85 (March 2013): 1–4.

[56] Cabestan, J. P. (2020). China's military base in Djibouti: A microcosm of China's growing competition with the United States and new bipolarity. *Journal of Contemporary China*, *29*(125), 731–747.

[57] https://adamsmithinternational.com/projects/preparing-an-expert-report-on-the-ports-of-djibouti/#resource:all.

situation to benefit economically by imposing basic taxes on these neighboring states' imported and exported goods. Third, the state of digital infrastructure which Djibouti enjoys can develop to unimagined levels. Fourth, Djibouti is also blessed with both wind power and solar power as its alternative sources of energy. These alternative energy sources can also be sources of high levels of revenue. Finally, Djibouti also enjoys large amounts of geothermal energy which it can convert and use for profitable advantage.

Furthermore, Djibouti also plays host to so many different national militaries. For example, French security policy, and the policies of other European states, act as external guarantors of the Djibouti state of security.[58] Similarly, the French military continues to play a significant role in the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean. They do this by way of cooperating with the European Union (EU), EUNAVFOR Atalanta, and European Union Capacity Building mission (EUCAP) which are all based in Djibouti.[59] Of the foreign militaries based in Djibouti, the United States is the most visible and active. The United States has been at the center of most coordination of counterterrorism activities in the HOA region.

Enhanced Cooperation Between Government, Civil Society, and Community Centers

Djibouti enjoys a cordial working relationship with local civil society organizations as well as other community-based organizations. This relationship promotes national cohesion among different communities/clans in the country. These cordial working relationships are a means of countering the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. In spite of the fact that the law of the land guarantees political and civil rights, the government still demands that these civil society organizations must get registered and get licensed by the Ministry of Interior. Similarly, the Djibouti government, through the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, has a total control over religious matters. This makes it easier for the government to

[58] Mkandawire, Thandika. "Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa." World Politics 67, no. 3 (2015): 563–612.

[59] Lee, John. "China Comes to Djibouti: Why Washington Should Be Worried." Foreign Affairs, 23 April 2015.

counter the problem of radicalization as well as the recruitment of persons into violent extremism.

Heightened Government Restrictions

Djibouti exercises official censorship authority over the type of sermons which are given during Friday prayers thereby regulating the conduct and activities of the Imams and worshipers. This is according to a Djibouti senior security officer interviewed by the author.[60] In the interview, the officer confirmed that all sermons are vetted before being delivered in the mosques in Djibouti. As a result of these powers being vested in government, many people have been arrested and detained. Most Imams have been fired and replaced and some of the mosques have been closed down indefinitely. Such hard approaches may create dissidents and lead to violent reactions and even a revolt against government policies by hard line religious scholars.

Counterterrorism and Community Resilience

The most important task for stakeholders in Djibouti is to survey the perceptions of the Djibouti citizens on many issues. These issues could range from representation, elections, and human rights among others.[61] These surveys may be performed using different means such as the Town hall meetings, hiring the services of research firms, employing public participation on any government programs as well as factoring in the views of the civil society organizations. In order for such surveys to generate honest outcomes, enough security should be provided and freedom of thought and expression should be jealously guarded.

Informed Modeling of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Interventions

It is imperative to implement effective CVE interventions depending on the amount of threat which a country experiences. The efforts relating to

[60] Telephone call interview of a senior Djibouti military officer by the author on October 4, 2021.

[61] Adam Clymer. "World Survey Says Negative Views of U.S. Are Rising," New York Times, December 5, 2002, p. 22.

the designing and implementing CVE strategies should be at least equal to the threat levels every country faces.[62] CVE strategies could be tailored in such a way that they respond to the local challenges as opposed to global challenges.[63]

Promoting Public Service Delivery, Transparency, and Accountability

Diversifying access to and accountable delivery of public goods, safety and security, and services to historically marginalized regions and groups in Djibouti is a critical early measure to begin addressing socio-economic and political turmoil in Djibouti. A trust deficit exists in Djibouti between population and government and improving statutory and non-statutory mechanisms for delivering public goods including civil and political rights, ample housing and infrastructure, and justice, security, and jobs, are key to alleviating this deficit. Corruption is one of the major reasons for a population's perception of unfairness and favoritism.[64] Measures to reduce corruption that could be adopted include determining a model for reporting of corruption cases, development of legal framework and disciplinary measures in governmental institutions to curb corruption, and encouraging participation in anti-corruption training and awareness. All of these measures would increase governmental transparency and accountability in service delivery and addressing political concerns. These measures could be strengthened through legally and operationally empowered independent oversight and accountability measures to take decisive action and stronger Anti-money Laundering (AML) controls considered essential for addressing lower-level and grand corruption.[65]

It is also imperative to build synergies between development assistance and CVE objectives. Identifying synergies within existing and planned development assistance at the national and international levels for addressing drivers of violence and violent extremism is important. This is considered a strategic necessity for designing a holistic approach

[62] Rosand, E, Millar, A., and Ipe, J., "Enhancing Counter-terrorism in Eastern Africa," African Security Review, 18:2, 2007.

[63] TSG IntelBrief, "Terrorism in the Horn of Africa", July 28, 2015.

[64] Sudan Tribune., Plural news and views on Sudan. (2016). Retrieved 9 September 2016.

[65] "Sudan: Arrival of First US Military Plane Since 2003" UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, May 21, 2012.

to CVE.[66] Other diverse approaches to CVE focus on addressing the underlying political and socio-economic grievances of communities and negotiating streams of development assistance. Taken together, these measures will be the primary means of achieving CVE goals. For example, supporting local entrepreneurship initiatives in communities can have an enormous impact on alleviating conditions of acute deprivation and sociopolitical marginalization.[67] Supporting governance reform, electoral monitoring systems, advocacy groups, and effective political party and campaign organization is essential for expanding the space for political empowerment and a crucial component for addressing grievances of political and socio-economic disenfranchisement.

Enhance Inclusive Community Engagement

Promoting trust among diverse Djibouti communities and between communities and their government is key for reducing a country's vulnerability to terrorism.[68] The Government of Djibouti could resort to constructive and inclusive dialogue to address the long-standing grievances inherent in the society.[69] For example, the use of counterterrorism laws and policies to persecute minority groups, the press, and political opposition severely damages community trust and limits the possibility of constructive dialogue.[70] Furthermore, strengthening inter-communal dialogue and engagement with civil society can help demonstrate Djibouti governmental willingness to accept criticism and formulate policy frameworks to address community needs and concerns. Civil society can serve as an essential public good in and of itself outside the realm of politics. Groups such as the Youth Talents Growth and Trade Networks with the aim of involving the youth and empowering them to

[66] Makinda, S., "The European Union and the Fight Against Terrorism and its Impact on Democracy Building in Africa," International Institute Against and Electoral Assistance, 2009, p.8.

[67] James Dobbins, "The UN"s Role in Nation-building: From the Congo to Iraq", Rand, 2005.

[68] Eric Croddy, "Dealing with Al Shifa: Intelligence and Counterproliferation," Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 52–60.

[69] Bush Increases Counter-terrorism Aid," Oxford Analytica, July 11, 2003 and Kevin J. Kelley, The East African, September 1, 2003.

[70] Oromo Liberation Front Press Release, September 30, 2003.

actively participate socio-economic growth of societies in Djibouti should be encouraged.

Free elections, an independent judiciary, civil society support, an independent media, and the promotion of advocacy institutions that can air citizens' grievances are also mechanisms for countering terrorist's narratives. Facilitating negotiation and reconciliation between groups and the state, debating solutions constructively, and channeling aspirations for effectively achieving political change give a government credibility to prove terrorists' motives wrong. Civil society is a vital asset in expanding civic education and engendering social, cultural, political, and economic development.[71]

Improving Accessibility to Quality Education

Focusing on promoting youth literacy, reduction of unemployment among the population and improving challenges facing rapid urbanization are important counterterrorism mechanisms.[72] Throughout Djibouti, the majority of youth are vulnerable to terrorist's messaging because of inadequate job opportunities due to poor accessibility of education or the problems of urbanization.[73] Countries such as Djibouti, where the rural population is migrating to cities, are faced by challenges of limited sources of employment and consequently youths are vulnerable to drug abuse and engaging in criminal activities and ultimately joining terror group.[74] With adequate support from the government, improvement besides support in the form of suitable urban planning, growth of opportunities for the

[71] Kessels, E. (2016). Violent extremism and instability in the greater Horn of Africa: An Examination of drivers and responses.

[72] Stephen Muiruri, "Most Wanted Terrorist Named," Daily Nation on the web, August 26, 2013 and "EA Countries Fail UN Anti-Terror Test," The East African, August 11, 2013.

[73] State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror. Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), (Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

[74] Reel, Monte. "Djibouti Is Hot: How a Forgotten Sandlot of a Country Became a Hub of International Power Games." Bloomberg Businessweek, 23 March 2016.

considerable youth prominence to gain jobs, focus on training in a vocational knowledge, or receive microloans to foster innovation and business development to offer great resilience to terrorism attraction.[75]

Engaging the Private Sector

Beyond promoting entrepreneurship and providing vocational and technical skills training, the private sector can support grassroots initiatives and empowerment programs by providing access to networks, communication tools, and financial and other resources.[76] This includes local businesses and regional, sub-regional, or national branches of multinationals that can contribute individually or pool their investments to maximize impact. The funding for such engagements could probably be accessed through the recently established Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund meant for community empowerment. One in which the private sector has played an influential role is the provision of employment and livelihood to former militants that are reintegrating into society, as well as to their families.[77]

Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation of Models

It is considered imperative to develop common metrics for the monitoring and evaluation of CVE programs.[78] The CVE field is still struggling with issues of definition and coherence and monitoring and evaluation frameworks remain underdeveloped. Evaluation is occurring at the counterterrorism approach level but is often incomplete and not publicly available; creating difficulties in drawing analytical comparisons that would allow for the identification of larger trends and general best practices.[79] Despite

[75] Braude, Joseph, and Tyler Jiang. "Why China and Saudi Arabia Are Building Bases in Djibouti." Huffington Post, 2016.

[76] Thompson, Peter. "East Africa Response Force Completes Validation, Demonstrates Crisis Response Capability," 19 February 2016.

[77] Jules Lobel, "The Use of Force to Respond to Terrorist Attacks: The Bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan" Yale Journal of International Law, vol. 24, no. 2 (Summer 1999).

[78] Lee, John. "China Comes to Djibouti: Why Washington Should Be Worried." Foreign Affairs, 23 April 2015.

[79] Benyagoub, Mehdi. Finding New Paths for Growth in Djibouti. World Bank: MENA Knowledge and Learning, no. 85 (March 2013): 1–4.

the inherent challenges of developing universal evaluation frameworks for such a diverse field, the growing body of literature on CVE evaluation can be further elaborated and refined to advance the development of common evaluation metrics. A key facility would be the inclusion of monitoring and evaluation components in project timelines and budgets across the Greater Horn region, as well as the promotion of publishing findings in order to allow for comparison and analysis.

Conclusion

Djibouti will remain a vulnerable location for terrorist activity in the Horn of Africa. This prognosis is derived from a reflection on its geo-strategic location, proximity to a hotbed for terrorist organizations in the HOA, a largely homogeneous population with the presence of high-value terrorist targets. Extremist political violence in Djibouti, regardless of the identity or label applied to the perpetrators, is symptomatic of deeply complex and long-standing political, economic, and social problems. The drivers and circumstances that contribute to terrorism are not dissimilar to those that fuel violent attacks in general. The legitimate exercises of power and accountable governance; economic, political, and social inclusion; access to justice and effective avenues of redress; and equitable distribution of public goods lie at the heart of achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation and reducing susceptibility to terror groups ideologies and institutions in Djibouti. In addressing the driving determinants of terrorism, promoting inclusivity and addressing inequalities in economic, social, and political spheres would enable the country to respond effectively to any conflicts that may yield vulnerability to terrorism which are critical for long-term achievement.

Successfully preventing terrorism in Djibouti, fostering the need to clearly comprehend the push factors promoting terrorism and adopting effective responses tailored to address the challenges in alignment with local, national, and regional contexts, based on strategic alliances between international and national actors and across nations, civil society groups, and local communities are paramount to successful counterterrorism policies. In view of Djibouti's vulnerability to insecurities, all stakeholders from the region should focus on enhancing coordination among all parties as a key to successfully battling terrorism in a holistic approach and strategies synchronized and put into good utilizations as informed by the prevailing circumstances.

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CHAPTER 8

Terrorism in Kenya: Trends and Perspectives

Stephen Mwachofi Singo and Edmond Pamba

Introduction

Kenya occupies a total area of 580,367 square kilometres and a total land area of 569,140 square kilometres with 11,227 square kilometres of water.[1] It lies across the equator in East Africa within the geographical coordinates of 100'N and 38′00E and has a coastline of 536 km of access to the Indian Ocean.[2] Her total international boundaries with five neighbouring African countries are 3,457 km shared with Ethiopia

[1] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, "Kenya" accessed 16 August 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/static/474ff6aa6a4aee27c94b984aa1089b74/KE-summary.pdf.

[2] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, "Kenya" accessed 16 August 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/kenya/.

S. M. Singo
Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: tomsingo@uonbi.ac.ke

E. Pamba (✉)
Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: edmond@horninstitute.org

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(867 km), Somalia (684 km), South Sudan (317 km), Tanzania (775 km), and Uganda (814 km).[3]

The estimated population of Kenya as at July 2021 is 54,685,051 comprising of the several ethnic groups notably Kikuyu 17.1%, Luhya 14.3%, Kalenjin 13.4%, Luo 10.7%, Kamba 9.8%, Somali 5.8%, Kisii 5.7%, Mijikenda 5.2%, Meru 4.2%, Maasai 2.5%, Turkana 2.1%, non-Kenyan 1%, and other 8.2%.[4] Kenya's core geographical features include Mount Kenya with the highest point at 5,199 m and the Rift Valley. In terms of religion, Kenya is dominated by Christians who constitute about 82.5% of the population, while Muslims and traditionalists are about 11.1% and 1.6% respectively, and others are 3.1%.[5] Politically, Kenya attained her independence in 1963 from Britain and is administratively divided into 47 counties with Nairobi as its capital city. It is further divided into eight regions of Nairobi, Coast, Central, Western, Nyanza, North Eastern, Eastern, and Rift Valley.

Since the 1998 twin bombings of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam by Al Qaeda, Kenya has remained a target of the jihadist agenda of global terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda. Currently, the major terrorist threat to Kenya is the Al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab group based in Somalia which borders Kenya to the east. While Al Qaeda employed 'hit and run' strategies involving to a lesser extent local operatives, Al Shabaab has demonstrated aggressive territorial expansionism, radicalization and recruitment of Kenyans and sustained attacks in the country since 2010. In fact, Al Shabaab set up an operational base in Kenya's Boni Forest in Lamu County, which the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) have been fighting to fully retake since 2015. Despite various counter terrorism (CT) strategies by the Kenyan government to counter Al Shabaab such as the 2011 military incursion into Somalia (later rehatted to the African Union Mission in Somalia—AMISOM peacekeeping force), revitalization of the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU), and the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), criminal justice system reforms to address the crime of terrorism and counter violent extremism strategies and action plans, Al Shabaab remains resilient. In fact, measures by the Kenyan government to counter Al Shabaab have partly alienated Muslims and Somalis

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

and subjected the youth in most-affected areas to extra-judicial treatment which further fuels radicalization to the advantage of Al Shabaab. To diminish the threat posed by Al Shabaab on Kenya, the country should focus on reducing the influence of domestic vulnerabilities to external terrorism by addressing governance challenges which alienate at-risk populations and push them towards violent extremist groups such as Al Shabaab.

Context and Background of Terrorism in Kenya

Kenya's alliance with Western powers, especially the United States, France, and Britain, and the existence of Western interests in Kenya, have exposed the country to global jihadist attacks since 1998.[6] It is worth noting that the 1996 fatwa issued by Osama Bin Laden extended Al Qaeda and global Jihadist attacks to western powers' interests and allies across the world. However, Kenya's own internal challenges such as the marginalization of Muslim minority regions in the north eastern and coastal areas and systemic disenfranchisement of the youth, Muslim and Somali populations form fault-lines which foreign extremist groups exploit to establish terrorist cells in the country. The grievances of marginalization and discrimination entertained by Muslim minorities and extremist Islamist groups against the State of Kenya form basis for building Islamist narratives for 'emancipating' the Muslim nation (Ummah) in Kenya and by extension globally. As a result, sections of the Muslim populations in Kenya are pulled into supporting and joining the terrorist groups, based on 'religious solidarity' and 'religious obligation'. The target group for Islamist radicalization and recruitment into terrorism being the youth, raises questions of structural challenges related to governance in Kenya, which reinforce youth vulnerability and the state's susceptibility to terrorism.

Incidents of terrorism have been part of Kenya's political history since the 1960s. However, the first terrorist attack which introduced Kenya to

[6] William W. Keller, "Anatomy of a terrorist attack. An indepth investigation into the 1998 bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania" Accessed July 28 2020 from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/26356/05_anatomy_terr_attack.pdf.

the threat of global terrorism was the 1975 terrorist attack on the Jewish-owned Norfolk Hotel by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).[7] It was followed by the 1998 bombing of the American embassy in Nairobi by al-Qaeda, which was carried out in pursuit of the organization's ideological war against Western powers for alleged 'desecration' of Muslim lands in the Middle East. Al Qaeda being a foreign terrorist organization, its bombing and operations in Nairobi raised questions of the role of domestic players. It later emerged that the bomb used was locally assembled by Mohammed Odeh and Mohamed al-Owhali at House number 43 in Runda Estate in Nairobi, after a Kenyan al-Qaeda operative, Harun Fazul, rented the property.[8] It was discovered that al-Qaeda had radicalized a number of Kenyan youth especially from the coastal region and recruited operatives among them.

In 2010, the Somalia-based al-Qaeda affiliate, Al Shabaab began to carry out terrorist attacks in Kenya, especially at the coastal region in Lamu. By 2011, the coastal region, north eastern region, and sections of Nairobi, had been infiltrated by Al Shabaab hence increased attacks in the country. As the name Al Shabaab ('youth' for Arabic) suggests, the group's main target for radicalization and recruitment in Kenya, Al Shabaab also targets the Muslim-majority regions of the country (north eastern and coastal regions) and Somali inhabited counties of Wajir, Mandera, and Garissa for radicalization and recruitment; the target regions fall under historically marginalized and socio-economically vulnerable regions of Kenya. As such, Al Shabaab exploits local contexts (the fault-lines in governance) in Kenya to drive in the wedge of global 'Jihad' and terrorism.

[7] Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen, and Paul Goldsmith, "Initiatives and perceptions to counter violent extremism in the coastal region of Kenya", *Journal for Deradicalization*, 16(2018) 70–102.

[8] William W. Keller, "Anatomy of a terrorist attack. An indepth investigation into the 1998 bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania" Accessed July 28 2020 from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/26356/05_anatomy_terr_attack.pdf.

Evolution of Domestic Radicalization and Recruitment in Kenya

The first foreign act of terrorism in Kenya happened in 1975, when the Jewish-owned Norfolk Hotel was bombed in Nairobi. The attack was claimed by a group sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The attack had undertones of Islamism, whereupon the Jewish state and its 'western enablers' were portrayed as infidels occupying and desecrating the holy land (cradle of Islam) of Palestine. The 1975 attack was thus seen as an act of 'Jihad' carried out in defence of the holy land and the 'suffering' Ummah. Kenya was portrayed as a 'complicit infidel' for its cooperation with Israel and Western powers (the United States, France, and Britain) which enabled the Israeli state in its 'oppression' of Muslims (Palestinians). The attack on Israeli interests in Kenya was to serve as a message to Kenya, Western powers, and Israel that Ummah was 'fighting back'.

In 1991, two important events happened in Eastern Africa. First, the military government of Siad Barre in Somalia collapsed, plunging the country into civil war and instability for decades to come. Islamist insurgent movements and forces shot up to claim political space in the country through the Al Ittihad Al Islamiyyah militia group. Second, Osama bin Laden, who had just founded the 'movement for global jihad' and issued a fatwa against the United States of America, its western allies, and other allies across the world, arrived in Sudan. The Islamic Front led by Colonel Omar Bashir, which had taken power in Khartoum in 1989, offered both protection and conducive sanctuary for the Jihadist sojourner.

While in Sudan, Bin Laden established al-Qaeda in East Africa as a branch of the global terrorist organization. Some of the pioneer members of al-Qaeda in Eastern Africa (AQEA) were former Mujahideens who had fought alongside Osama Bin Laden against the soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s.[9] Such individuals include Somali citizens such as Sheikh Adan Haashi 'Ayro, Abu Mansour al Amriki (Omar Hamaami), Sheikh Ali Hassam Gheddu, Fuad Mohamed Qalaf, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweis, Ibrahim Haji Hama (al Afghani), Mukhtar

[9] Katherine Zimmerman, "The terror threat from Somalia. The internationalization of Al Shabaab", *Critical Threats;* Accessed October 18 2020 from https://www.criticalthreats.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/CTP_Terror_Threat_From_Somalia_Shabaab_Internationalization-1.pdf.

Abu Zubair (Ahmed Abdi Godane), and Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur), among others.[10] Kenyan citizens included Issa Osman Issa, Najeh Fazul Abdullah Mohammed (Harun Fazul), and Saleh Ali Nabhan, among others.[11] Osama Bin Laden also established ties with Islamists in Somalia and in 1993, America's *Operation Restore Hope* in Somalia was botched as Somali militias with the support of AQEA, expelled America from Mogadishu.[12] When Osama Bin Laden was leaving Sudan in 1996, AQEA had managed to successfully conduct its first act of 'Jihad' against America in Eastern Africa.[13]

In Kenya, AQEA formed ties with Al-Hijra (Islamist Somali migrants in Kenya) and the outlawed Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) which was formed in 1982 and had grown to hold considerable influence at Kenya's coastal Muslim-majority region. The IPK was an Islamist organization led by Sheikh Khalid Balala and had notable members such as Sheikh Aboud Rogo.[14] Subsequently, AQEA started carrying out radicalization and recruitment campaigns in the coastal region through its proxies in Kenya for terrorist theatres and operations in Kenya and foreign lands. As such, the second act of AQEA's 'Jihad' came in 1998, when the twin bombings of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam took place. A Kenyan, Harun Fazul was among the masterminds of the 1998 twin bombings, alongside Khalfan Khamis Mohamed (Tanzanian), Julius Kisingo (Tanzanian), Mohamed Odeh (Palestinian), Hamdam Khalif

[10] Former Afghanistan Mujahideens and an Islamist outfit in Somalia, the Islamic Union, were identified by Osama Bin Laden, as al-Qaeda's potential proxies or allies in advancement of "global Jihad" in Eastern Africa. Subsequently, al-Qaeda provided training, logistical and financial support to IU in Somalia.

[11] Katherine Zimmerman, "The terror threat from Somalia. The internationalization of Al Shabaab", *Critical Threats;* Accessed October 18 2020 from https://www.criticalthreats.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/CTP_Terror_Threat_From_Somalia_Shabaab_Internationalization-1.pdf.

[12] Ibid.

[13] The Sudanese government was under pressure from the United States of America to expel Osama Bin Laden from the country.

[14] Sheikh Khalid Balala called for "Jihad" against the government of Kenya and threatened his opponents with death as noted by UNHCR (1995).

Allah (Egyptian), Abdel Rahman (Egyptian), and Mohamed al-Owhali—British-born Saudi.[15]

In November 2002, just four years after the 1998 bombing, other twin bombings conducted by al-Qaeda through AQEA, happened in Mombasa, Kenya's coastal and second-largest city. Harun Fazul and his fighters, individuals from the coastal region, were involved in the attacks which targeted Paradise Hotel in Kikambala (15 miles north of Mombasa) and an Israeli commercial airline (attempted rocket-propelled missile).[16] Issa Osman Issa, a pioneer member of AQEA, fired the surface to air missile.[17] Following the quickly rising terrorist attacks in Kenya amidst growing domestic radicalization, the Government of Kenya initiated the process of deliberately fighting terrorism through various counter terrorism strategies. In 2003, a raft of counter terrorism measures was adopted including the formation of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) to provide the institutional framework for fighting terrorism and the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU) with specialized training to prevent and combat terrorism. Additionally, the Suppression of Terrorism Bill was developed in the same year. However, the Bill's initial framing, which targeted and profiled Islam and Muslims as 'terrorists', could not pass.[18]

As a result of the lack of a legal framework, no elaborate counter terrorism nor counter violent extremism strategies were implemented, as they would be outside the provisions of the law. Only parsimonious approaches were adopted for operational guidelines for the newly established institutional framework for combating terrorism, targeting the known terrorists. The country was left woefully unprepared for new

[15] William W. Keller, "Anatomy of a terrorist attack. An indepth investigation into the 1998 bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania" Accessed July 28 2020 from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/26356/05_anatomy_terr_attack.pdf.

[16] Katherine Zimmerman, "The terror threat from Somalia. The internationalization of Al Shabaab", *Critical Threats;* Accessed October 18 2020 from https://www.criticalthreats.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/CTP_Terror_Threat_From_Somalia_Shabaab_Internationalization-1.pdf.

[17] Ibid.

[18] The anti-terrorism Bill would pass later in 2012, when all contentious components of the Bill had been resolved. Otherwise, the Bill risked ruining ethnic and religious interrelations in the country, and further sanction alienation and persecution of Muslims in Kenya.

terrorist groups with diverse tactics and capabilities. It was equally difficult for the country to anticipate new dynamics of terrorism such as the possibility of domestic radicalization and recruitment into terrorism.

In the period between 2006 and 2007, another terrorist group and an al-Qaeda affiliate, Al Shabaab emerged in Somalia. Al Ittihad Al Islamiyya (AIAI), the militant wing of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) governing southern and central Somalia in Mogadishu through Sharia law, splintered into Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam. The American-backed Ethiopian invasion of Mogadishu in 2006 had dismantled the ICU, leading to the splinter.[19] Al Shabaab emerged the most extreme and violent insurgency group (fighting against the Ethiopian 'occupation' of Somalia and the newly installed UN-backed secular Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu. Al Shabaab quickly evolved into a terrorist group as it began to employ terrorist means against TFG and the Ethiopian troops. Ethiopian troops were replaced by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeeping and stabilization forces in 2007.

The leaders of the newly formed Al Shabaab included the pioneer members of AQEA such as Sheikh Aaadan Haashi 'Ayro (the first leader of Al Shabaab as an independent entity), Abu Mansour al Amriki (Omar Hamaami) who was the English-speaking recruiter for the group, Sheikh Ali Hassam Gheddu who commanded the east-central Somalia brigades, Fuad Mohamed Qalaf, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweis (later left to lead Hizbul Islam), and Ibrahim Haji Hama (al Afghani) who commanded Brigades in Puntland and Somaliland.[20] Later, Mukhtar Abu Zubair (Ahmed Abdi Godane) took over from Sheikh Adan Haashi 'Ayro, and Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur) became the group's spokesperson. Kenyans, such as Saleh Ali Nabhan joined Al Shabaab, Issa Osman Issa commanded a unit in Al Shabaab, while serving as a senior leader for AQEA under Najeh Fazul Abdullah Mohammed (Harun Fazul), who also inter-operationalized Al Shabaab and AQAEA.[21]

Back in Kenya, another Al Shabaab network was established, responsible for radicalization and recruitment, mostly targeting Muslim youth

[19] Katherine Zimmerman, "The terror threat from Somalia. The internationalization of Al Shabaab", *Critical Threats;* Accessed October 18 2020 from https://www.criticalthreats.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/07/CTP_Terror_Threat_From_Somalia_Shabaab_Internationalization-1.pdf.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

in Muslim-majority north eastern (mostly co-ethnic Somali in Wajir, Mandera and Garissa counties) and coastal (Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, Lamu, Tana River) regions. Certain radical Muslim clerics in Kenya formed the religious-ideological wing of the Al Shabaab network, including Sheikh Aboud Rogo (discussed before under AQEA and Islamic Party of Kenya).[22] Sheikh Abubakar Shariff Ahmed alias 'Makaburi', Sheikh Ibrahim Omar, and Sheikh Samir 'Abu Nuseyba" Khan at the coast among others in north eastern Kenya. The clerics mobilized funding, material, and logistical support for Al Shabaab while radicalizing and recruiting young Muslim men into the group. The other unit of Al Shabaab network in Kenya is Al-Hijra, which evolved from Muslim Youth Centre (MYC). MYC was formed by Shayk Ahmad Iman at Pumwani Riyadha Mosque in Nairobi's Somali-dominated suburb of Eastleigh (and Muslim-dominated Majengo slums) in 2008 as a community-based organization for economic empowerment of the youth in the areas mentioned.[23] MYC, however, turned Islamist as the group was fundamentally inclined towards supporting Muslims and their cause or struggle in Kenya, thereby raising funds and conducting recruitment for Al Shabaab in Nairobi, Garissa, Eldoret, and Mombasa. Shaikh Ahmad Iman later transformed MYC into Al-Hijra (referring to 'Somali migrants in Kenya '), and travelled to join Al Shabaab in 2009 in Somalia (Nzes, 2014). Al-Hijra has since grown into a regional extremist entity in East Africa, drawing Muslim, Somali and non-Somali youth into Al Shabaab.

Domestic Vulnerabilities Facilitating Terrorism in Kenya

The security threat posed by Al Shabaab in Kenya manifests itself through the following vulnerabilities and threats, especially among the most-affected geographical regions of Kenya.

[22] Sheikh Aboud Rogo was listed on the UN sanctions list by the United Nations Security Council in 2012 pursuant to resolution 1844 (2008), on July 25, 2012.

[23] Fredrick Nzes, "Al-Hijra: Al-Shabaab's Affiliate in Kenya", *Counter Terrorism Center* Accessed August 10, 2020 from https://www.ctc.usma.edu/al-hijra-al-shababs-affiliate-in-kenya/.

Youth Bulge

Generally, Kenya is experiencing the youth bulge since the youth make 80% of its entire population. The growth of the youth population in Kenya from 1960 to 2015 can be shown in Fig. 8.1.

The Kenyan 'youth bulge' is at peak, which might lead to a demographic dividend or disaster if youth interests are not well captured and addressed by governance and policies especially affecting job creation.[24] This is because one of the major security risk factors associated with the youth bulge in Kenya, is the general unemployment and specifically, youth unemployment as seen in Fig. 8.2.

Youth unemployment stands at 35% compared to the national unemployment rate of 17.5%.[25] Al Shabaab hence easily targets and lures the unemployed Kenyan youth with financial incentives such as 'well paying' service in the group, by exploiting the legitimate frustrations of the youth due to economic vulnerability.[26]

Poverty and Unemployment

Poverty in the coastal region is generally high, with an average incidence of 62% and 70% in Mombasa alone, and unemployment levels at the rate of 40%.[27] A 2013 study revealed that 'there was (sic) consensus that unemployment and a general lack of economic opportunity was a major source of general insecurity and can potentially contribute to opening pathways to violent extremism among individuals in vulnerable

[24] Victor Ronneberg, and Siddharth Chatterj, "Why Kenya must create a million new jobs annually", *The Standard*, Accessed August 14 2020 from https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/business/article/2001227446/why-kenya-must-create-a-million-new-jobs-annually.

[25] Charles Villa-Vicencio and Alex Humphrey Buchanan-Clarke, "Community Perceptions of Violent Extremism in Kenya", *Institute for Justice and Reconciliation*. Accessed from http://life-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/IJR20Violent20Extremism20in20Kenya20final20web2028129.pdf.

[26] Kennedy Mkutu and Vincent Opondo, "The complexity of radicalization and recruitment in Kwale, Kenya", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (2019)1–23 https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1520700.

[27] Liat Shetret, Mathew Shwartz and Danielle Cotter, "Mapping perceptions of violent extremism. Pilot study of community perceptions in Kenya and Somaliland", *Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation*. Accessed September 15, 2020; https://www.globalcenter.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/02/Jan2013_MPVE_PliotStuday.pdf.

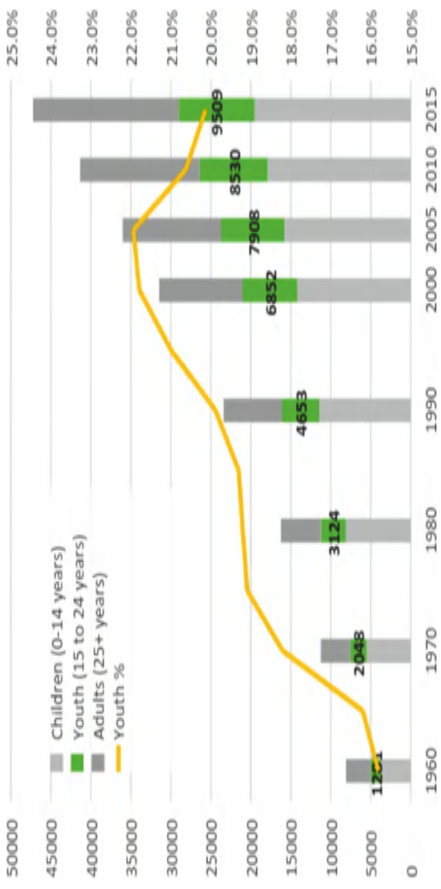

Fig. 8.1 Kenya's population structure from 1960 to 2015 (*Source* United Nation, 2017; British Council, 2017)

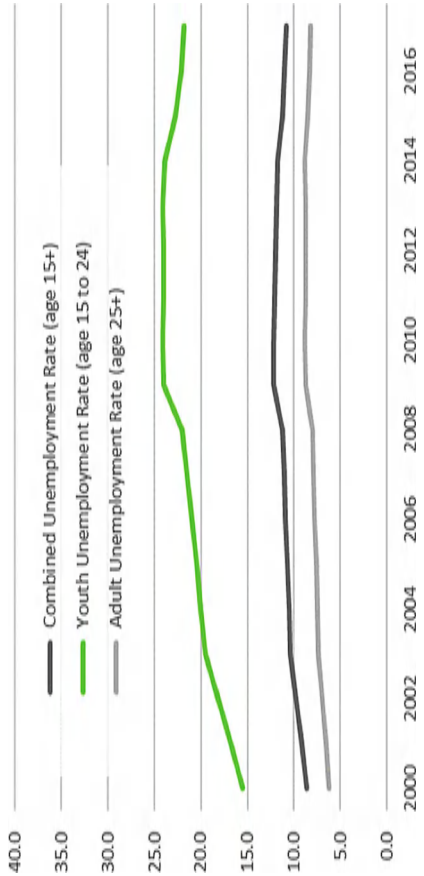

Fig. 8.2 Youth (15–24 years) unemployment in Kenya (*Source* British Council, 2017)

local communities in Kenya'.[28] However, the nexus between poverty and radicalization into violent extremism in coastal counties such as Kwale and Mombasa lies in Al Shabaab's recruitment processes and strategies which are based on promises of employment and financial rewards of up to USD 1,000 per month for mostly the unemployed youth.[29]

Handling of Criminal Suspects and Court Processes

Kenya's counter terrorism strategies applied in the terror-prone regions in north eastern and coastal counties have had the unintended outcome of pushing more youth into radicalization and violent extremism, due to the excesses of hard approaches by security agencies.[30] Cases of police brutality in Mombasa and Kwale have been reported since 2010.[31] Specific responsibility for violations of human rights through torture, arbitrary raids and detention, enforced disappearances, and extra-judicial killings of the region's youth, is mostly placed on the Anti-Terror Police Unit—ATPU.[32] Human Rights Watch for instance, observes that:

> ATPU has carried out a series of extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances […] also found evidence of arbitrary arrests and mistreatment of terrorism suspects in detention.[33] In Majengo (Mombasa), suspects of terrorism were either being shot in public places or abducted from vehicles and courtrooms […] they [terror suspects] were beaten badly during arrests, detained in isolated blocks and denied access to their families or lawyers.[34]

[28] Ibid.

[29] Kennedy Mkutu and Vincent Opondo, "The complexity of radicalization and recruitment in Kwale, Kenya", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (2019)1–23 https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1520700.

[30] Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen, and Paul Goldsmith, "Initiatives and perceptions to counter violent extremism in the coastal region of Kenya", *Journal for Deradicalization*, 16(2018) 70–102.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

The unjust manner in which the youth (majority of the terror suspects) are treated by the police exacerbates their frustrations,[35] which adds to local grievances and further radicalizes the region's youth to join extremist groups such as Al Shabaab. As a result of improper criminal justice practices, 'terrorist attacks are (sic) a means of revenge on a society, [in which] terrorists believe they are mistreated'.[36] It can thus be argued that allegations of police brutality, harassment of the Muslim minority, and extra-judicial killings are undermining the country's security efforts, and the police are only fueling Islamic extremism by inflicting collective punishment on Kenyan Muslims.[37]

Marginalization of Minority Groups

Vast Kenyan territories especially North Eastern, Upper Eastern, and Coastal regions have been historically marginalized economically, politically, and socially, hence are not fully integrated into modern Kenya. The Commission of Revenue Allocation qualifies marginalized areas in Kenya, based on high levels of poverty, poor status of roads, low access to electricity, low access to safe water, poor access to healthcare facilities, low levels of literacy, among other development factors forming the country's county development index.[38] The resultant disenfranchisement due to marginalization creates grievances among the populations occupying these territories which are most targeted for radicalization and recruitment by Al Shabaab. Majority of Muslims are concentrated in specific areas including along the Coastal strip, Upper Eastern and North Eastern Counties. Although Muslims enjoy considerable political influence in

[35] Liat Shetret, Mathew Shwartz and Danielle Cotter, "Mapping perceptions of violent extremism. Pilot study of community perceptions in Kenya and Somaliland", *Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation*. Accessed September 15, 2020 from https://www.globalcenter.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/02/Jan2013_MPVE_PliotStuday.pdf.

[36] Moech, S, "*The threat of terrorism*" (New York: SAGE Publication, 2012).

[37] Jonathan Horowitz, "We're Tired of Taking You to the Court." Open Society Foundations, Accessed September 20, 2020 from https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/human-rights-abuses-by-kenya-atpu-20140220.pdf.

[38] "Second policy and criteria for sharing revenue among marginalized areas", Commission of Revenue Allocation [CRA], Accessed September 20, 2020 from https://www.crakenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CRA-37-Second-Policy-on-Marginalised-Areas-June-16th-2018.pdf.

areas with a Muslim majority, such regions experience systematic alienation from the state hence creating a disconnect that has led most of these regions into opposition politics and vulnerability to violent extremism.[39] The coastal region for instance experienced separatist clamour in 2009 which led to the formation of an extremist organization, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC).[40]

The correlation between marginalization and recruitment of youth from marginalized regions of Kenya can be understood in relative deprivation argument by Alan Walker,[41] who posits that feelings of deprivation are fraternal, whereby individuals perceive deprivation on behalf of a group (the marginalized) compared to another group (the rest of Kenya).[42] In Kenya, a study conducted by the UNDP (2017) found that marginalization leads to radicalization into violent extremism among the youth from marginalized areas and observed that:

In Kenya, as in many other countries, the regions acknowledged to be flashpoints of radicalization and violent extremism are synonymous with extreme poverty, high illiteracy, and underinvestment in basic services. The majority of those living in these regions have for years believed themselves to be excluded from the national development agenda.

Ethnic Marginalization of the Somali Community and Social Identity Group Solidarity in Kenya

Power relations between the state and the Somali ethnic group have been shaped by tension and mistrust, since independence talks systematic marginalization of ethnic Somalis in Kenya after independence in 1963.[43]

[39] Anneli Botha, Radicalisation in Kenya: Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council, Institute for Security Studies, Accessed December 08, 2021 from https://issafrica.org/research/papers/radicalisation-in-kenya-recruitment-to-al-shabaab-and-the-mombasa-republican-council.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ian Walker and Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Relative deprivation theory: An overview and conceptual critique, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 23 no.4 (1984), 301–310.

[42] Walter Garison Runciman, "Types of Relative Deprivation", in *Relative Deprivation and Social Comparison: The Ontario Symposium*, Eds, James Olson, Herman C. P and Zanna P. Mark (2014, Hove, UK: Psychology Press).

[43] "North-eastern Kenya. A prospective analysis", *IRIS* Accessed October 14, 2020 from https://www.iris-(HRW)france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ENGObservatoire-Prospective-Huma-NORTHEasternKenya-12-2015.pdf.

It is worth remembering that the Somalis occupying a huge chunk of the north eastern region, held irredentist sentiments around Kenya's independence leading to the 1963–67 Kenya—Somalia Shifta War. Irredentist passions were later revived in early 1990s whereupon the state responded by brutally quelling the movement, further worsening relations with the state.[44] However, the negative perception against Somalis by the state has gradually been improving since 2003 as more Somalis have been rising in all the three branches of government.[45]

Notwithstanding the improving regard for Somalis by the state, the Somali community was victimized by *Operation Usalama Watch* in 2014 which rounded up thousands of Somalis and caused family separations among them, in the wake of increased Al Shabaab attacks. The security laws (amendment) Bill of 2014 (later enacted into law and various sections suspended by the High Court) was widely criticized by Muslim leaders, politicians, and civil society groups for targeting and profiling Somalis and Muslims and undermining civil liberties. For instance, Leslie Lefkow, the Deputy Africa Director at Human Rights Watch (HRW), opined that 'the hastily offered Security Bill infringes on many basic rights and freedoms protected in Kenya's constitution and international human rights law.'[46] Terrorist attacks by Al Shabaab spiked further around this time in various parts of the country which was linked to increased radicalization as a result of perceived persecution of Somalis and Muslims. Al Shabaab has always exploited the fragilities of relations between the state and the Somali community to mobilize the Somali youth along the frames of marginalization and persecution (including historical injustices) by the state before radicalizing them with Islamist ideologies and recruiting them into terrorism.[47]

A 2015 study indicates that Somalis in Kenya perceive themselves as second-rate citizens with seven out of every 10 Somalis lamenting unfair

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] "Kenya: Security Bill Tramples Human Rights", *Human Rights Watch*, Accessed October 17 2020 from https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/13/kenya-security-bill-tramples-basic-rights.

[47] "North-eastern Kenya. A prospective analysis", *IRIS* Accessed October 14, 2020 from https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ENGObservatoire-Prospective-Huma-NORTHEasternKenya-12-2015.pdf.

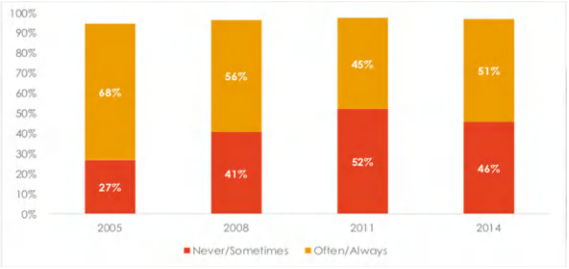

Fig. 8.3 Level of perception of unfair treatment by the government among Somalis (*Source* Buchanan-Clarke & Lekalake, 2015)

treatment from the government in 2005.[48] The level of perception of injustice from the government upon Somalis has been gradually falling but remains high at 51%[49] as shown in Fig. 8.3.

Marginalization of the Muslim Minority

Geographically, Muslim-majority regions such as the coastal and north eastern region are the most historically marginalized in Kenya. The systematic marginalization of Muslims in these regions permeated to all public and social services, land ownership, economic opportunities, and political representation. Marginalization coupled with periodic climatic hazards and inter-clan violence, have trapped the north eastern region in endemic poverty. Generally, the coastal and north eastern regions register the highest poverty levels in the country and experience relatively the highest conditions of underdevelopment.[50] Grievances against the state for the legacies of marginalization are exploited by Al Shabaab for radicalization and recruitment of Muslim youth from these regions.[51]

[48] Stephen Buchanan Clarke and Rorisang Lekalake, "Violent extremism in Africa: Public opinion from the Sahel, Lake Chad, and the Horn", *Afrobarometer*, Accessed October 24, 2021 from https://afrobarometer.org/publications/pp32-violent-extremism-africa-public-opinion-sahel-lake-chad-and-horn.

[49] Ibid.

[50] "North-eastern Kenya. A prospective analysis", *IRIS* Accessed October 14, 2020 from https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ENGObservatoire-Prospective-Huma-NORTHEasternKenya-12-2015.pdf.

[51] Ibid.

Similarly, counter terrorism operations mostly appear to target Muslims and Muslim-majority regions, thereby reinforcing the Muslim community's perception of the state as a symbol and apparatus of injustice, persecution, marginalization, and insecurity. The collective punishment of Muslim communities through imposition of curfews, extra-judicial killings, and enforced disappearances of Muslim youth and clerics as well as arbitrary security raids and arrests, have further aggravated Muslim grievances hence driving more of Muslim youth into Al Shabaab.[52] In another 2014 study, about 65% of Al Shabaab respondents (youth) cited the government as a threat to the Muslim community, and injustices meted at Muslims by the state as a reason for joining Al Shabaab.[53]

Proximity and Porous Border with Somalia

Kenya shares a long porous border with Somalia, stretching from the coastal County of Lamu to three north eastern counties of Wajir, Garissa, and Mandera. The close proximity between coastal and north eastern regions of Kenya and Somalia compounded by the porosity of Kenya's international border with Somalia facilitates the movement of extremist agents from Somalia into these regions for radicalization and recruitment campaigns. Kenya's regions bordering Somalia have experienced the highest level of radicalization and the highest number of terrorist attacks compared to areas far flung from the border. For instance, major attacks such as the Mpeketoni attack in June 2014 which killed 50 people, the Mandera bus attack in 2014 which killed 28 people, and the Garissa University attack of 2015 which claimed about 150 lives are well within the border range with Somalia.

Incidentally, the border communities in Kenya (especially the north eastern region) are marginalized and characterized by high levels of illiteracy. These regions also have fewer economic opportunities and

[52] Anneli Botha, "Radicalization in Kenya: Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council", *Institute for Security Studies*, Accessed September 20, 2020 from https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/Paper265.pdf.

[53] Anneli Botha, "Political Socialization and Terrorist Radicalization among Individuals who Joined al-Shabaab in Kenya," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 3* no.11 (2014) 895–919. https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.952511.

prolonged conflicts.[54] The border communities are hence targeted by state security agencies through security operations and excessive use of force, thereby alienating them further from the mainstream population and entrenching anti-government sentiment among them.[55] Extremist groups such as Al Shabaab hence exploit the border communities' grievances to radicalize and recruit members among the youth population within the border communities as seen in Kenya's north eastern and coastal counties.

However, in Kenya's situation, another factor associated with the close proximity to Somalia is the influx of Somali refugees into Kenya from terror-prone Somalia. Extremist elements cross into Kenya alongside asylum seekers, unchecked and unregistered, and establish sleeper cells in various parts of the country, waiting to strike.[56] It is worth noting that the Kenyan government rounded up thousands of Somalis in Nairobi for deportation to Somalia through a security operation (*Operation Usalama Watch*) that was widely condemned for ethnic profiling. The government on its part cited the influx of illegal Somali migrants within whom terrorists hid and planned attacks in Mombasa and Nairobi. In 2016 and 2021 the government further threatened to shut down the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, hosting hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees citing coordination between refugees and terrorists. The government cited security reasons having deemed the camp a breeding ground for violent extremists. The urban Somali refugees have named the Eastleigh suburban area of Nairobi 'Little Mogadishu', and have been found to be accomplices in at least five of Al Shabaab's terror attacks in Kenya. Eastleigh has hundreds of thousands of ethnic Somalis, with a good number being either registered or unregistered refugees from Somalia.[57]

[54] Tom Anyim, "The Role of Border Communities in Counter Terrorism in Africa: Case Study of Kenya" being thesis submitted to the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi, November 2019.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Alice Mary Wamuyu Kariuki, "Challenges of Combating Homegrown Terrorism in Kenya", (Doctoral Dissertation, Walden University, 2019).

[57] Ibid.

Conclusion

Kenya's close geographical proximity to terror-prone and war-torn Somalia, further exposes the country to the vagaries of instability and militancy. Incidentally, Muslim majority regions in Kenya (counties of Garissa, Wajir, Mander, Lamu, Kilifi, and Mombasa) lie close to Kenya's borders with Somalia, thereby presenting an immediate foothold for Al Shabaab in Kenya. Most terrorist attacks have happened in this region, targeting non-Muslim groups and government entities, and major waves of radicalization have similarly been experienced in these regions. At the global level, Kenya's position and role in the global fight against terrorism and its military, economic, and diplomatic relationship with Western powers, makes it a pawn in the global clash of civilizations. The country is put in a hard place to balance its strategic relationships and achieve its national security goals.

However, the threat of terrorism to Kenya majorly breeds in the country's internal structural fractures sustained from poor governance practices and security measures. Such malpractices have entrenched the feeling of alienation, marginalization and persecution among the most vulnerable communities (Somalia and the Muslim minority). As a result, while the threat of terrorism is external to Kenya, the process of radicalization and recruitment into terrorism has found itself a niche in the imperfections of the Kenyan state or in the state-society fissures which expose Kenya's vulnerable population to Al Shabaab's influence. The country now faces the twin threat of both external and domestic terrorism. Al Shabaab has managed to turn sections of Kenyan citizens against their state and the Kenyan state against its citizens, a struggle in which human rights violations are registered and more resentment against the state and counter terrorism measures emerge. To prevent such blow-backs, the Kenyan government should perhaps prioritize a softer approach to preventing terrorism inside the country and maintain the hard approach outside its borders (in Somalia).

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CHAPTER 9

Somalia and Al Shabaab Terrorism in the Horn of Africa

Edmond Pamba and Stephen Mwachofi Singo

Introduction

Somalia lies on the eastern coast of Africa covering a total area of 637,660 sq kilometres (land—627,337 km and water—10,320 km) and a coastline of about 3,025 km (Africa's longest). The country falls on latitude 10° 00'N and 49° 00'W across the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean. Somalia's borders cover a total of 2,385 km: Kenya to the South (684 km), Ethiopia to the West (1,640 km), and Djibouti to the North (61 km).

The Central Intelligence Agency projects Somalia's population as of July 2021 to be 12,094,640. Demographically, Somalia is composed of the following ethnic groups: Somali (85%), Bantu and non-Somali groups

E. Pamba (✉)
Horn International Institute for Strategic Studies, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: edmond@horninstitute.org

S. M. Singo
Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: tomsingo@uonbi.ac.ke

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(15%). Harmonious coexistence was solid on the basis of 'homogeneity' but is now threatened by the clan-based equation of power distribution and power relations, as well as the spate of violent extremism and terrorism which has had a high tide since 2006 when the major terrorist organisation in the country and Eastern Africa, Al Shabaab, emerged.

Politically, Somalia gained independence from Italy on 1 July 1960 and was later joined by British Somaliland which had gained her independence on 26 June 1960. The country's capital is Mogadishu, which means 'sight killer' or 'blinder' in Somali. Administratively, the country is a federal republic with 6 member states of Galmudug, Jubaland, Puntland, Hirshabelle, South West, and Somaliland (claimed but not controlled) with Mogadishu as its capital city. It has 18 administrative regions: Awdal, Bakool, Banaadir, Bari, Bay, Galguduud, Gedo, Hiiraan, Jubbada Dhexe (Middle Jubba), Jubbada Hoose (Lower Jubba), Mudug, Nugaal, Sanaag, Shabeellaha Dhexe (Middle Shabelle), Shabeellaha Hoose (Lower Shabelle), Sool, Togdheer, and Woqooyi Galbeed.

Context and Background of Terrorism in Somalia

Over 30 years of civil war and instability in Somalia have created vast ungoverned spaces, worsened further by a sustained political and military power vacuum in the country. Subsequently, extremist and militant mobilisation for the 'reorganisation' of the Somali state have dominated the late years of instability. Political Islam, which found legitimacy in the imperfections of the secular state of Somalia in the 1970s, forms the basis for today's Al Shabaab Islamist movement. The enduring structural challenges of governance, administration, power distribution, poverty, and economic development in the country provide a conducive ecosystem for Al Shabaab's persistence.[1]

It is therefore the Islamists struggle to reorganise the state of Somalia along extremist ideological leaning of the Al Shabaab, as well as the unconventionality of Al Shabaab's approach and means, often camouflaged as Somali nationalism that has sustained terrorism in the country. On the other hand, the impact of destabilising decades of the civil war in Somalia has left legacies such as ungoverned spaces, weak rule of law, weak governance institutions, poor service delivery, and significant

[1] Ken Menkhaus, "Al-Shabaab and social media: A double-edged sword", *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 20 no.2 (2014) 309–327.

levels of underdevelopment and corruption, which fuel resentment against the state, and create conditions conducive for violent extremism and terrorism.[2] Al Shabaab's agenda plays into the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa region and orbits the galaxy of global terrorism, having established an umbilical relationship with Al Qaeda in 2012.

The fall of the government of President Siad Barre in 1991 to a military coup, plunged Somalia into three decades of civil war. Siad Barre had also taken power by coup in 1969, leading Somalia to over two decades of oppression, corruption, economic decline, poor delivery of public and social services, and high levels of underdevelopment. Coupled with the foregoing governance challenges, vicious clan-based competition for political power, led the country into total collapse as power fragmented to clan-based militia and Islamist militia. The collapse of government in Somalia left over three quarters of the country (central and southern regions) ungoverned as territorial and political spaces turned into theatres for militant struggle for power as civil war ensued.[3] Northern Somalia claimed independence, and formed what is today, Somaliland.

The civil war and instability led to the exodus of Somalis fleeing violence and seeking refuge in the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and Kenya; the two countries have significant ethnic Somali minorities. The rest of the Somali refugees arrived in Western Europe, Australia, and Northern America, and together with refugees dispersed across the Horn of Africa, formed the Somali diaspora which continues to identify with the political struggle in Somalia.

In Somalia, clan-based militancy increased in the years following the fall of Siad Barre, as various groups struggled to establish control. Some of the groups fighting for control in Mogadishu were the remnants of the insurgency movements which had weakened the military rule of Siad Barre. Islamist militant groups have been part of the insurgency movements in Somalia, and continue struggling for central authority in Mogadishu.[4] However, Islamist movements such as Al Shabaab do not

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-ittihad al-Islami", *Terrorism Monitor;* Accessed August 10, 2020 from https://jamestown.org/program/somalias-icu-and-its-roots-in-al-ittihad-al-islami/.

[4] Rob Wise, "Al Shabaab" *Centre for Strategic & International studies*, Accessed August 13, 2020 from http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/4039~v~Al_Shabaab.pdf.

just seek to control Somalia; they endeavour to redefine the state of Somalia through puritanical ideals and a fusion of state and religion. Since clan-based differences and competition for power along ethnic lines failed to unify various groups fighting for control, Islam remained the single most unifying factor across clan and militia interests in the country in its state of near entropy.

Since Islam is practised by about 99% of the population,[5] Islamic religion serves as a cross-cutting identity for Al Shabaab to draw inter-clan following, while religious-moralistic ideals of justice based on the group's pursuit for the Sharia system form a compelling value-system for re-imagination of Somalia. On the other hand, Al Shabaab's overriding nationalistic ambitions make it acquire an Islamist-nationalist ideology, which further earns it more legitimacy and national following, relative to clan-based militia groups.[6] However, it is the influence of global Islamist movements from the Middle East and North Africa, especially the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda, which further inspired the crystallisation of militant Islamism and ambitions for an Islamic state in Somalia. Today's terrorist groups and terrorism in Somalia, have a foundational basis in the early forms of Islamist organisation as will be discussed in the section below.

Origin and Evolution of Terrorism in Somalia

The strand of violent extremism and terrorism in Somalia can be traced to three eras: 1970s, 1980–90s, and 2006–present. In the first era, Islamist movements rose up against the dysfunctions of the secular state model, after democratic rule was overthrown in 1969 by General Siad Barre who imposed military rule on Somalia. The preceding Islamist groups include Al-Salafiya Al-Jadiid which pursued Wahhabi doctrine of Islam

[5] UNHCR, "2016 Report on international religious freedom – Somalia", *Refworld* Accessed July 14, 2020 from https://www.refworld.org/docid/59b7d84313.html.

[6] Rob Wise, "Al Shabaab" *Centre for Strategic & International studies*, Accessed August 13, 2020 from http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/4039~v~Al_Shabaab.pdf.

and was founded by Islamic scholars who had received religious education (Wahhabism) in Saudi Arabia.[7] Al-Salafiya Al-Jadiid (ASAJ) was vanquished by Siad Barre in late 1970s. In 1984, after the fall of ASAJ, Ittihad Al Islamiyyah (AIAI) was founded in Mogadishu to sustain an insurgency against the Siad Barre military regime. AIAI was formed by former members of Osama Bin Laden's Mujahedeen that fought against Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Other founding members of AIAI were students on scholarships, from Sudan and Saudi Arabia, who had been exposed to the radical teachings of Islam. The groups' short-term goal was to overthrow the military government of Siad Barre.[8]

With the fall of Barre in 1991, the group moved to its medium-term and long-term goals of inspiring secession in Ethiopia's Ogaden region (predominantly occupied by Somalis), and establishing an Islamic State in Eastern Africa (Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, and Kenya).[9] However, the Ogaden campaign was thwarted by the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 1996.[10] Hence in 1997, AIAI renounced its militancy, transitioned into a political party, and refocused itself on creating an Islamic State in Eastern Africa by first seeking a political base in Mogadishu.[11] During the group's transition, AIAI joined a judicial-based form of 'administration' in Mogadishu known as the Islamic courts.

Unlike AIAI, which was purely Islamist, the Islamic courts were clan-based groupings, which were governing Mogadishu by Sharia law.[12] In 2000, several of the clan-based Islamic courts formed the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) as political and judicial arm of 'government' in Mogadishu, and exercised jurisdiction over southern and central Somalia.

[7] Abdisaid M. Ali, The Al Shabaab Al-Mujahidiin – A Profile of the First Somali Terrorist Organisation, *Institut für Strategie – Politik – Sicherheits und Wirtschaftsberatung, Berlin,* Accessed December 29, 2021 from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/55851/AlShabaab.pdf.

[8] Sunguta West, "Somalia's ICU and its Roots in al-ittihad al-Islami", *Terrorism Monitor;* Accessed August 10, 2020 from https://jamestown.org/program/somalias-icu-and-its-roots-in-al-ittihad-al-islami/.

[9] Ibid.

[10] "Al Shabaab". *Counter Extremism* Project, Accessed July 21, 2020 from https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/al-shabab.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1 no.2 (2007) 151–160.

AIAI became ICU's military wing. The formation of an Islamic government in the Horn of Africa threatened Western strategic objectives in the region. As a result, Western powers led by the United States (US) pushed efforts to replace the ICU government with a democratic civilian and secular government. In 2004, the United Nations-led and the United States supported the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia (domiciled in Baidoa). The TFG was formed to take power in Mogadishu and lead the country back to stability. In 2006, the ICU defeated TFG and imposed strict Sharia rule in the country and conducted some cross-border raids into Ethiopia.[13] The ICU victory led to further instability, as the US-backed Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia in 2006 and forced the ICU out of Mogadishu in the effort to dismantle the Islamic government and this resulted to the reinstatement of the TFG.[14]

The US-backed Ethiopian invasion of Mogadishu marked the turning point for terrorism in Somalia, when AIAI (the hitherto militant wing of ICU), fragmented into Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam in 2006. Al Shabaab emerged as the main insurgency movement against the TFG and Ethiopian troops. Al Shabaab adopted a more violent and extremist approach in its insurgency and capitalised on the historical hostility among the Somali public (domestic and diaspora) of foreign 'occupation' especially from 'Christian (viewed as crusader) powers'. Al Shabaab hence rode on Wahhabi-Salafi Jihadism—'holy war in defense of Somalia' (land of Muslims) against Christian invaders or suzerainty.

Al Shabaab had strategically invoked the nationalistic passions among Somalis against 'Ethiopian occupation' and cast the US-sponsorship of Ethiopia as a 'conquest of the Muslim soil by western infidels', and called for 'Jihad' against the 'occupiers', thus drawing more members and support across Somalia, the Horn of Africa region, Europe, Australia, and North America.[15] Al Shabaab hence grew and acquired more influence, military strength, and sympathy from the local population, and territory which it seized in southern and central Somalia by 2007. In

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

fact, about 95% of the group's leadership comes from central Somalia.[16] Facing increased military onslaught from Ethiopian troops, Al Shabaab quickly condensed into a major terrorist organisation.[17]

Al Shabaab gained more strength as three more groups of Islamists joined its fold; the groups included Islamists who advocated for a militarily strong ICU, *Takfir wal Hijra* (diaspora movement), and a group of Somali militants who had participated in jihadi theatres in Afghanistan and Middle East since 1970s through 1980s. The latter had links with Al Qaeda, having been part of Osama bin Laden's Mujahideen fighters in Afghanistan, who drove out the Soviet Union from the peninsula in late 1970s.[18]

The Al Shabaab exploited powerful tools such as ideology (Wahhabi-Salafi Islamism) and nationalism (pan-Somalism and 'greater Somalia') to gain legitimacy in Somalia.[19] However, the group became a regional threat when it began to push an expansionist Jihadist agenda which targeted frontier countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti with its idea of creating an Islamic state in Eastern Africa. Secondly, the group's idea of achieving a unified state for all Somali populations in the region or 'the Greater Somalia', meant annexation territories or Somali irredentism in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.[20]

Regional governments in the Horn of Africa hence increasingly gained interest to counter Al Shabaab to halt its expansionist agenda in the region and responded to the African Union's call for military deployment in Somalia for peacekeeping and stabilisation. In 2007, the African Union

[16] Abdisaid M. Ali, The Al Shabaab Al-Mujahidiin – A Profile of the First Somali Terrorist Organisation, *Institut für Strategie – Politik – Sicherheits und Wirtschaftsberatung, Berlin*, Accessed December 29, 2021 from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/55851/AlShabaab.pdf.

[17] Roland Marchal, "The rise of a Jihadi movement in a country at war. *Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujahideen*" Sciencepo; Accessed August 29, 2020 from https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/art_RM2.pdf.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Abdisaid M. Ali, The Al Shabaab Al-Mujahidiin – A Profile of the First Somali Terrorist Organisation, *Institut für Strategie – Politik – Sicherheits und Wirtschaftsberatung, Berlin*, Accessed December 29, 2021 from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/55851/AlShabaab.pdf.

[20] Ibid.

Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was launched.[21] However, around the time of the deployment of AMISOM in Somalia, Al Shabaab's military personnel and capabilities had exponentially grown, as the group had recruited more members through the nationalistic rhetoric and Islamist narrative of 'defensive jihad' against foreign (Ethiopian) occupation. The group was controlling central and southern Somalia, having captured the crucial ports of Kismayo and Mogadishu which formed its largest financial resource bases.

The Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to the AMISOM were largely drawn from the East Africa region. As of 2007, the mission comprised Ugandan and Burundian forces,[22] which were later joined by Djibouti in 2011, Kenya in 2012, and Ethiopia in 2014.[23] AMISOM's concept of operations, partitioned central and southern Somalia among its units into Sector 1 under Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), Sector 2 under the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF), Sector 3 under Ethiopia National Defense Forces (ENDF), Sector 4 under Djibouti National Defense Forces (DNDF), Sector 5 under Burundi National Defense Forces (BNDF), and the newly created Sector 6 under KDF and ENDF as shown in Fig. 9.1.

The increasing presence and military gains of AMISOM in Somalia bore heavy implications on Al Shabaab militarily, financially, territorially, and ideologically. Al Shabaab responded through tactical and strategic shifts to stay resilient. The group began targeting AMISOM troop contributing countries, first by establishing terrorist cells in troop contributing countries (TCCs) especially Uganda, Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia. It also staged attacks in the TCCs. The other objective of foreign recruitment was to boost the number of non-Somali fighters to stop regional governments from profiling Somali population and to diffuse violent extremism to outside the Somali community and complicate efforts to counter Al Shabaab. Then senior leader Mukhtar Robow

[21] Matt Freear and Cedric de Coning, "Lessons from the African Union Mission in Somalia AMISOM for Peace Operations in Mali", *Stability* Journal Accessed September 04, 2020 from https://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.bj/print/.

[22] Paul Williams, "AMISOM in Transition", *Rift Valley Institute*, Accessed August 06, 2020 from https://riftvalley.net/publication/amisom-transition.

[23] Paul Williams, "Joining AMISOM: why six African states contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia", *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 12 no.1(2017) 172–192.

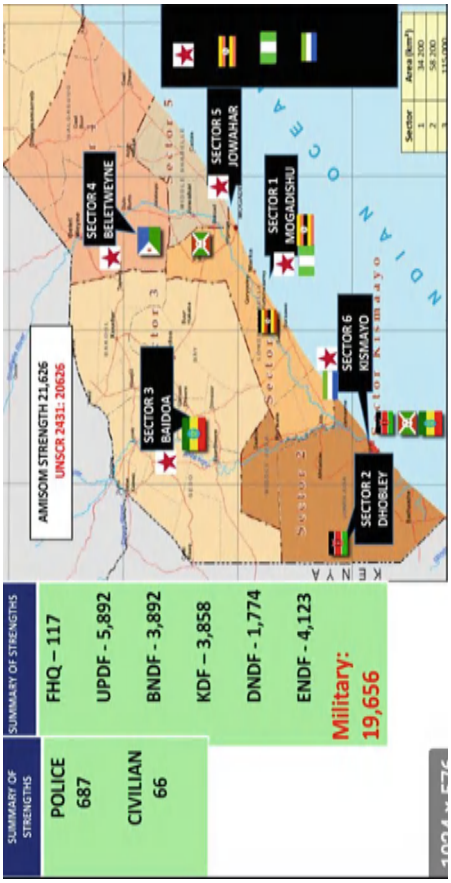

Fig. 9.1 AMISOM Positions in Somalia (*Source* Budi Setiawan/Slideplayer)

echoed this in an 'interview' when he appealed to foreign fighters to join Al Shabab, acknowledging that '[we] lack the precious element of the foreign fighters'. There is an insufficient number of non-Somali brothers.[24]

Thirdly, Al Shabaab aggressively began to draw fighters from TCCs to boost its diminishing force capacity, hence creating the foreign fighter problem to the Horn of Africa. Other foreign fighters were drawn from foreign countries in Western Europe, Australia, and North America, where Somali populations (most came as asylum seekers following the civil war) and Muslim minorities live (and probably face alienation). The foreign fighters recruited from TCC by Al Shabaab are used to carry out attacks in Somalia and neighbouring countries. For instance, the 2010 Kampala attack in Uganda involved Kenyan citizens who were later extradited to Uganda for prosecution,[25] while the 2014 Garissa University attack involved a Head-teacher in Garissa town and a local Chief's son (Law graduate of University of Nairobi) as part of the masterminds.[26]

The January 2019 attack at Dusit D2 Hotel in Nairobi also involved Kenyan attackers. As such, Al Shabaab has externalised attacks and operations from Somalia to Kenya, Djibouti, Uganda, and Ethiopia with the objective of pushing the TCCs into withdrawing troops from Somalia. The group then embraced decentralisation, thereby establishing fragmented structures for semi-autonomous decision-making and operations. Al Shabaab established various 'brigades' in its military organisation (*Jaysh al-Usra*—the army of hardship) in central and southern Somalia as follows[27]:

[24] Chris Harnisch, The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of al Shabaab. *Critical Threats*, Accessed December 06, 2021 from https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/the-terror-threat-from-somalia-the-internationalization-of-al-shabaab.

[25] Simon Ndonga, "Govt defends extradition of Kenyans to Uganda", *Capital News*, Accessed on December 31, 2021 from https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2010/09/govt-defends-extradition-of-kenyans-to-uganda/.

[26] BBN News, Kenya attack: 147 dead in Garissa University assault, *BBC News*, Accessed on December 29, 2021 from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32169080.

[27] Matt Bryden, "The reinvention of Al Shabaab. A strategy of choice or necessity", *Centre for Strategic and International Studies* (CSIS), Accessed July 25, 2020 from https://csis-websiteprod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs_public/legacy_files/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf.

a. *Sa'aad Bin Mu'aad* for Gedo region
b. *Ali Bin Abu Daalib* in Banaadir, for Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions
c. *Abu Dalha Al-SudaaniI* for Lower and Middle Juba regions
d. *Saalah Nabhaan* for Bay and Bakool regions
e. *Kalid Bin Waliid* for Hiiran, Mudug, and Galgaduud
f. *Liwaa'ul Qudus* for eastern Sanaag and Bari regions

Fourthly, in recruitment of fighters, agents, and recruiters for the group, Al Shabaab started involving women and girls in its activities and membership. Women were strategic assets since less suspicion was placed on them by security agencies and the general public, which gave them the advantage of smuggling Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) by hiding them in their robes. Women were similarly found to bear stronger affectionate influence and special roles in families and communities, which Al Shabaab found useful for resource and personnel mobilisation. Moreover, women were also given frontline roles as suicide bombers and spies. Importantly, women are reported to be lured into al Shabab to serve as Jihadi brides where they are sexually exploited by the group's fighters.[28]

Furthermore, after assessing its growing weakness, Al Shabaab shifted from its nationalistic Islamism, to joining global jihadi movements and agenda, especially Al Qaeda's global ideologies for establishment of a global caliphate. Thus, Al Shabaab announced ideological allegiance with Al Qaeda in 2012, with the then group's leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane pledging allegiance to Al Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri. The group hoped for operational, tactical, and strategic support from Al Qaeda, and also to complicate the war against terrorism in Somalia.[29]

Another tactical shift engaged by Al Shabaab regarded combat and military strategy. The group moved from direct confrontation with the AMISOM troops and Somalia's security forces to ambush missions on AMISOM barracks, car bombing, suicide bombing, grenade attacks, and assassination of political figures in the country. Furthermore, the group adopted the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), especially

[28] "Conference on Terrorism Report", *Horn* Institute, Accessed March 18, 2021 from https://horninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Conference-on-Terrorism-Report-.pdf.

[29] "Somalia's al-Shabaab join al Qaeda", *BBC News*, Accessed July 27, 2020 from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16979440.

vehicle-borne improvised devices and person-borne improvised devices (VBIED and PBIED). Similarly, Al Shabaab increasingly employed guerrilla tactics.[30]

Lastly, Al Shabaab made a rather strategic shift by opening up alternative sources of financing to offset the depleting financial streams having lost the ports of Kismayo and Mogadishu to AMISOM troops and the Somali government. The new methods developed for raising financial resources for Al Shabaab were further designed to evade the international agencies monitoring illicit financial flows.[31] As such, Al Shabaab begun raising financial support from businesses in Somalia and Somali businesses in diaspora, some Muslim charity organisations, the Somali diaspora community, other terrorist groups, and some state sponsors in the Muslim and Arab world.[32] Most of the remittances to Al Shabaab were being done through the unregulated and unregulated Somali money transfer system, known as Hawala.

Terrorist Threat Dynamics in Somalia

The Al Shabaab remains a major terrorist threat not just to Somalia but also to the entire Horn of Africa region, having remained resilient over the years against a multinational military campaign. It continued to unleash audacious onslaughts in Kenya and Somalia in December 2022. Between 3 and 13 December 2022, the group executed five terrorist attacks in Kenya while 10 Ethiopian soldiers were and wounded four others in two bomb explosions and ambush in Baidoa and Day Nanay cities of

[30] Matt Bryden, "The reinvention of Al Shabaab. A strategy of choice or necessity", *Centre for Strategic and International Studies* (CSIS), Accessed July 25, 2020 from https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs_public/legacy_files/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf.

[31] Geoffrey Kambere, "Financing Al Shabaab: the vital port of Kismayo", *Globalecco;* Accessed July 14, 2020 from https://globalecco.org/financing-al-shabaab-the-vital-port-of-kismayo.

[32] Tom Keatinge, "The role of finance in defeating Al-Shabaab", RUSI Accessed August 29, 2020 from https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201412_whr_2-14_keatinge_web_0.pdf.

Bay province in Somalia.[33] Following more Al Shabaab attacks at al-Kowthar town in the Middle Shabelle region, another 19 Somali soldiers were killed while 23 others were wounded. Reports published in the group's News Agency between 16 and 20 December show photos of its fighters standing victoriously on top of destroyed BMP vehicles following successful attacks it executed. Victims of the intensified Al Shabaab attacks include the AMISOM forces from Burundi, Djibouti, and Uganda as well as the Somali government militia.

The indications point to Al Shabaab's resurgence instead of decline with the threats manifesting in various ways. These include the Al Shabaab territorial control threat, Al Shabaab Revenue Collection Threat, Al Shabaab Intelligence (Amniyat) Threat, Al Shabaab Intelligence (Amniyat) Threat, and the Al Shabaab's Digital Threat. These are further discussed below.

Territorial Control Threat

Al Shabaab still controls significant territory in Somalia, especially in the South. AMISOM has majorly focused on capturing cities, key airports and seaports, urban areas, and towns from Al Shabaab, while leaving the terrorist group to retreat into the vast rural areas of Somalia. While AMISOM claims to have recaptured 80% of the territory previously held by Al Shabaab, the remaining 20% is still significant, and continues to serve as an effective operational base for Al Shabaab's regrouping and strategizing. The group continues to proselytise, establish control, and influence over local populations in the villages, forcibly recruiting among the rural populations and imposing taxes on businesses, people, and humanitarian aid in the rural areas.

Estimates project that more territory is falling under the group's control. Somali Security Forces' incapacity to wield the monopoly of violence and effectively bring Somalia under the control of the federal government has enabled Al Shabaab to remain resilient, adaptive, and flexible in its tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). This has allowed them to gain popular support in not only ungoverned spaces in Somalia, but also in areas under government and AMISOM control where they

[33] Site Jihadist Threat Analysis, "Shabaab Maintains Momentum in Kenya while claiming Dozens of Casualties in Somalia over 5 Days" 22 December 2022, distribution@siteintelgroup.com (accessed 22 December 2022).

command substantial tax extortion bases. For instance, in Mogadishu's Port which is under government control, Al Shabaab taxes a 40-Foot Container at $160 while a 20-Foot Container is taxed at $100 where the terror group even has the facts of how many containers every trader imports.[34] It is thus estimated that Al Shabaab taxes in millions make a significant part of the group's annual revenue on top of collections from its other businesses. For instance, the group is involved in the smuggling of arms from Yemen, the United States, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, and drug trafficking (cocaine and heroin) from Afghanistan repackaged as wines from South Africa for European markets.[35]

Al Shabaab Revenue Collection Threat

The Al Shabaab has over the years developed a sophisticated network of revenue collection both in areas it controls and areas under government control, to the extent that the group now collects more revenue than the government. Al Shabaab's revenue collected from the public, businesses, and aid agencies is approximately $15 million monthly or $180 million per year, while the government collects $141 million annually.[36] The group's taxation system includes income tax on businesses, toll taxes, and custom duties at seaports and airports, extortion, and religious tax. The religious tax is divided into two: Zakat and Infaa. Zakat is charged at a fixed portion (2.5%) of personal and business income or wealth which ideally should go to charity but is demanded by Al Shabaab as an obligation to 'Jihad'. *Infaaq* on the other hand is ideally an Islamic form of

[34] Omar Farouk and Max Bearak, 'If I don't pay, they kill me', *The Washington Post*. Accessed March 18, 2021 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/if-i-dont-pay-they-kill-me-al-shabab-tightens-its-grip-on-somalia-with-growing-tax-racket/2019/08/30/81472b38-beac-11e9-a8b0-7ed8a0d5dc5d_story.html.

[35] Katharine Petrich, Cows, Charcoal, and Cocaine: Al-Shabaab's Criminal Activities in the Horn of Africa. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2019.1678873, Accessed from December 14, 2021 from https://www.cvereferenceguide.org/sites/default/files/2021/03/Cows_Charcoal_and_Cocaine_Al_Shabaab_s_Criminal_Activities_in_the_Hornof_Africa_1_.pdf.

[36] Jason Woodroofe, New Report Shows Militant Group Al-Shabab Collecting $15 Million A Month in Tax Revenue in Somalia. *The Organization for World Peace*, Accessed December 10, 2021 from https://theowp.org/new-report-shows-militant-group-al-shabab-collecting-15-million-a-month-in-tax-revenue-in-somalia/.

charity not pegged on expectations of returns.[37] The group targets the lucrative sectors of the Somali economy and prominent business figures for taxation and extortion.

According to a report by Hiraal Institute based in Somalia, the Al Shabaab now has a revenue collection system which covers all high-value imports and exports, by pegging tax per shipping container.[38] For instance, a 40-foot container is charged a tax of $160 each and the 20-feet container $100 each. A toll tax of $555 is levied on each truck whereby large trucks pay $1,150. Taxation by Al Shabaab further extends to agricultural produce which is taxed 10% of its market value, personal cars are taxed $200 for registration, and camels and cows $5 and $2 per head to be sold at the market. In lieu of monetary payment, Al Shabab takes one for every 25 camels and one for every 40 goats.[39] Other items such as heavy-duty tractors are charged $200 for operation licence, mini-vans are charged $200, and the water well drilling machine $3000 for registration.[40] The group has developed extensive business intelligence gathering through its intelligence arm, *Amniyat* which further plays a significant role in tax enforcement, through monitoring and zeroing in on tax defaulters. *Amniyaat*'s valuation of import and export products at sea and air ports helps al Shabab to develop an inventory of volumes of imports and exports going through the ports and tax estimates (Fig. 9.2).

Al Shabaab further exploits the regulatory loopholes in the financial sector since unregulated or under-regulated financial services continue to serve as conduits of Al Shabaab's revenue. Banks operating in Somalia, mobile money transfer platforms, and the Hawala money transfer system common among Somalis and Arabs, have exhibited poor regulation which Al Shabaab exploits to circulate its finances.[41] Another parallel system of taxation or revenue collections by al Shabab thrives in the name of Zakat, which is paid as an Islamic 'religious' obligation annually. Zakat has been enforced by al Shabab upon businesses and individuals across southern

[37] Hiraal Institute. (2020). A Losing Game: Countering al-Shabab's Financial System. Mogadishu: *Hiraal Institute*, Accessed December 12, 2021 from https://hiraalinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-Losing-Game.pdf.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

Fig. 9.2 The Rate of Businesses Paying Tax to Al Shabaab in Somalia Cities (*Source* Hiraal Institute, 2020)

and central Somalia, in fixed denominations according to one's status and business size to be paid annually.[42] *Infaaq* is paid by businessmen and clans as a last resort option for Al Shabaab whenever significant revenue shortfalls are experienced and are normally not preferred by the group since it involves extortion and paints Al Shabaab's use of religion in bad light.

The failure by the Federal Government of Somalia and its international partners to help Somalia establish a formal and efficient financial sector and taxation system has further exposed businesses to Al Shabaab especially (re-)export and import businesses. For instance, Al Shabab benefits from sugar and charcoal entering and leaving Somalia respectively. Estimates that al Shabab charges $1,050 equally on each truck of sugar and each truck of charcoal, as well as across the country at checkpoints.[43] Al Shabab is able to collect about $8 – $18 million annually from charcoal for instance, from Badhaadhe District on the border with Kenya on and 33% of the charcoal export value at ports of Kismayo in Jubaland and Bosaso in Puntland to a tune of USD 38–56 million annually.[44] About eight years ago, charcoal was the primary revenue source for al Shabab bringing in $350 million from exports to Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, and Egypt.[45]

Al Shabaab Intelligence (Amniyaat) Threat

The intelligence wing of Al Shabaab, *Amniyaat*, has infiltrated sensitive quarters of the federal government of Somalia. *Amniyat* has infiltrated almost every key government installation, institution, and protocols including top national security agencies, parliament, and the public service. The group infiltrates the government by sending one of its own members into the government through defection or service, by converting government officers into Al Shabaab members and by

[42] Ibid.

[43] Mary Harper, Somalia conflict: Al-Shabab 'collects more revenue than government'. *BBC NEWS*, Accessed from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54690561.

[44] Ryan Lenora Brown, Terror group Al Shabab doesn't smuggle ivory for cash. It sells charcoal. *The Christian Science Monitor*, Accessed December 20, 2021 from https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2014/0625/Terror-group-Al-Shabab-doesn-t-smuggle-ivory-for-cash.-It-sells-charcoal.

[45] Ibid.

recruiting government officers as agents for special purposes.[46] In July 2019 for instance, the mayor of Mogadishu, Abdirahman Omar Osman, was assassinated by Al Shabaab through suicide bombing by his two female aides; the suicide bomber was a blind female municipal employee and the two women took leave and travelled to al Shabab controlled area a month before the attack.[47] Earlier in April, authorities had arraigned the commissioner for Mahaas, a central Somalia town, for aiding the bombing which killed his own deputy. In 2016, the head of Mogadishu Airport security, Adiweli Mohamed Maow, was convicted for smuggling a laptop bomb onto an outbound plane, which went off 15 minutes after take-off. In perhaps the most sensitive case, a top official of the Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), Abdisalam Mohamed Hassan, was found to be cooperating with the Al Shabaab by providing identities and data of NISA's agents in 2014.[48] Apparently, the Al Shabaab wields significant and near accurate operational, intelligence, and offensive capabilities of the Somali government, its defence, and security forces including the AMISOM while it existed. The failure to cut the flow of such critical information to the terrorist group continues to forearm Al Shabaab which in turn lays siege on Somalia's security, peace, and stability.

Al Shabaab's Digital Threat

Al Shabaab has increasingly moved to establish its digital presence as another frontier for its Jihadism. Regional governments in the Horn of Africa may be playing catch-up since regulation of internet-enabled social spaces is a complicated process where privacy and individual freedoms of internet users are involved.[49] For Al Shabaab, the digital media strategy is

[46] Harun Maruf, "Somalia assesses Al-Shabaab moles' infiltration of government", VOA, Accessed July 16, 2020 from https://www.voanews.com/africa/somalia-assesses-al-shabab-moles-infiltration-government.

[47] Abdi Sheikh, "Somalia says blind female suicide bomber killed Mogadishu mayor", *Reuters,* Accessed March 18, 2021 from https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-security-bomber-idUKKCN1UZ1CN.

[48] Harun Maruf, "Somalia assesses Al-Shabaab moles' infiltration of government", VOA, Accessed July 16, 2020 from https://www.voanews.com/africa/somalia-assesses-al-shabab-moles-infiltration-government.

[49] Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Shiraz Maher, S and James Sheehan, ('Lights, Camera, Jihad: Al-Shabaab's Western Media Strategy'. International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (ICSR), (2012, 1- 30), Accessed on

a survival tactic which helps it manipulate information and target vulnerable populations with radical and propaganda material to protect its brand and make the extremist course attractive to potential recruits in the wake of military gains by AMISOM, Somali security forces, and other troops. Al Shabab instrumentally uses the digital media platforms for recruitment, radicalization, resource mobilisation, and operational coordination.[50] The anatomy of the group's digital caliphate can thus be seen to be built around the following media pillars: mass media (the al-Kata'ib Media), social media (Twitter and Telegram), blogs and websites, and print media.

The major jihadist groups have a global media branch which produces and circulates radical materials as al-Sahab is for al Qaeda, al-Furqan for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and al-Andalus for al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[51] In the late 2009, al Shabab established the al-Kata'ib Foundation for Media Production (Muassasa al-Kata'ib lil-Intaj al-I'lami), followed by establishment of al-Kata'ib News Channel (Qanat al-Kata'ib al-Ikhbariya) on 26 July 2010.[52] Al-Kata'ib Foundation is 'in charge of all publications and news about Jihad and Mujahideen as a minbar or pulpit of disseminating facts to our Muslim brothers all over the world'.[53] while Al-Kata'ib News Channel is an audio-visual or 'television' channel under al-Kata'ib Foundation, in charge of relaying live or recorded audio and pictures from the battlegrounds (al-maydan) online as proof and evidence of the group's Jihad on the ground.

On the other front, social media platforms enable online recruitment, due to mass media platforms they offer, as well as individualised end-to-end encrypted communication channels. Al Shabab opened its Facebook and Twitter accounts on 25 May 2011 and 7 December 2011 respectively. The Twitter account was opened under the name HSM Press Office and quickly gained about 16,630 followers by 7 October 2012 with just 917

August 24, 2020 from: https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ICSR-Report Lights-Camera-Jihad-al-Shabaab's-Western-Media-Strategy.pdf.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Hosaka Shuji, Media Strategies of Radical Jihadist Organizations: A Case Study if Non-Somali Media of al-Shabaab. *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, (2012):5(1–2): 3–25.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

tweets.[54] The group uses Twitter for three purposes: tactical, strategic, and propaganda. On a tactical level, Twitter (or social media generally) is employed to coordinate members' knowledge and consolidate the group's coherency. The tactical nature of tweets includes information on the size of 'mission', style of execution, and outcome so as to keep members fed on a consistent and same set of information to increase coherency and reduce resistance to mobilisation.[55]

Strategically, Twitter serves as a tool for information creation and verification with the view to shape public opinion through exerting control over the release of stories, the content of stories, and the framing of stories. Through information creation and control, the group builds credibility among its target audience the more its stories are believable and the less opposing information sources are believable.[56] Lastly, Al Shabaab deploys its media branch on Twitter to protect its 'brand' through information warfare and propaganda. The group targets to destroy the narrative created by the global and Somali mainstream media covering the group's activities in the region especially from negative and security perspectives, terming them as partial, subjective, dishonest, and manipulative.

Al Shabab further developed websites such as Heegan.net, SomaliMemo, Shahada News, Bogga Calamada, Shabakadda AmiirNuur, Radio Al Furqaan, and Kataaib.net which are all in Somali language and target Somali speakers through videos, textual information, soundbites and audios and other lots of materials.[57] However, with the internet only covering one per cent of the nearly 7% population, and one million Somalis residing outside the country, the websites primarily target the Somali diaspora especially in the Gulf and Western countries with wide access to the internet. Al Shabab also runs a digital magazine known as *Gaidi Mtaani* [terrorism in the streets] which complies 'visually powerful, slick and professionally authored and well-argued' articles.[58]

[54] Yale Review of International Studies, Tweeting to Win: Al-Shabaab's Strategic Use of Microblogging. *Yale Review of International Studies*, Accessed September 13, 2020 from https://yris.yira.org/essays/837.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] David M. Anderson and Jacob McKnight, Kenya at War: Al Shabab and its enemies in East Africa, *African Affairs*, (2014)114(454), 1–27.

[58] Ibid.

Gaidi Mtaani is employed by al Shabab to promote individual or self-radicalization across the East Africa and it is intended to create lone-wolves for decentralised operations.[59] With lone-wolves, the group targets to limit the predictability of its operations in the region and to create a home-grown problem in the region's countries.

Conclusion

Somalia's problem of Islamist terror is a mix of extreme political Islam which challenges the imperfections of the secular state model and seeks its improvement through Islamic political ideals and principles. The government in Mogadishu is perceived as a reincarnation of the toppled regime of Siad Barre in 1991, riddled with corruption, inefficient service delivery, low levels of popular support, and endemic political infighting. The government in Mogadishu and the federal dispensation are also perceived as instalments of foreign and western powers ('infidels'), hence, those serving in the government become 'apostates' for aiding the 'infidels' establish rule over the 'Muslim soil'. The Mohamed Farmaajo-led Mogadishu government, including the executive and federal parliament, was not directly elected through popular mandate. As such, the current government suffers a significant legitimacy challenge which Al Shabaab might continue to exploit and pose as an efficient and popular alternative the more public trust in government is lost. There is a need for the federal government of Somalia and the federating state governments to prioritise working closely to build collective vision and improve the institutional capacity to be able to respond to increasing governance responsibilities and challenges. Such efforts will prevent Al Shabaab from benefiting from the inefficiencies and dysfunction in government. In short, the secular democratic model of governance should be seen to efficiently function to counter the Islamist model of governance.

Secondly, AMISOM commenced full exit by December 2023 and efforts are in place to avert major security gaps that could subject Somalia to the Taliban-style of government take-over that accompanied the withdrawal of US troops in 2020. This is because Somalia's security sector is poorly developed, unprofessional, and deeply fractured along clan lines. The security sector is perhaps the last bastion of Somalia's peace and

[59] John C. Amble and Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Jihadist Radicalization in East Africa: Two Case Studies. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, (2014) 37(6): 523–540.

stability but is the weakest at the moment. The national military and police have experienced defections, mutinies, infighting, and a willingness to take political sides, as was demonstrated in the April 2021 clashes between pro-opposition and pro-government forces. With such dysfunction and weaknesses, the exit of AMISOM might prove disastrous for Somalia if the country's security sector will not have developed adequate capacity to take over national security responsibility.

Lastly, it is important to counter Al Shabaab's extremist ideology, online propaganda, and psychological operations through ideological pushbacks and effective digital monitoring and regulation. To this end, the Somali government should work with development partners, the civil society, and various religious networks in the country to effectively improve and implement its National Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy.

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CHAPTER 10

Understanding Terrorism in Somaliland and Puntland

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Felix Ikalewumi

Introduction

Somaliland and Puntland are located within Somalia's internationally recognised territory in the Horn of Africa. However, Somaliland is a self-acclaimed independent republic existing as a state but without any recognition of her statehood beyond its borders. In terms of international boundaries, Somaliland has contiguous borders with Djibouti and Ethiopia.[1] It also has access to the coastal domain in the Gulf of Aden near the entrance to the Bab al-Mandeb, which is a major Sea Line of

[1] "Somalia" accessed 5 September 2021, https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/somalia.htm.

C. N.-E. Okereke
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria

F. Ikalewumi (✉)
Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: felixola1789@yahoo.com

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Communication (SLOC) through which an estimated one-third of global shipping passes.[2] The territory covers an area of 68,000 square miles, and it has an estimated population of 4 million people who are known as Somalis or Somalilanders.[3] The primary language spoken is Somali while Arabic and English are second languages. Islam is the predominant religion. The Map of Somaliland and Puntland is shown in Fig. 10.1.

Historically, Somaliland was a former protectorate of Britain. After it gained independence in 1960, it formed a union with Italian Somalia. By 1981, opposition Somali elements formed the Somali National Movement (SNM) with the objective of overthrowing then Somali President Siad Barre's dictatorship. The SNM was very active in northern Somalia and in the heat of the Somali civil war in 1991 which led to the collapse of Siad Barre's regime, the SNM declared itself independent of Mogadishu on 18 May 1991 and adopted Hargeisa as its capital.[4] The choice of Somaliland to opt for independence has been attributed to its distinct history of colonial experience with Britain prior to the union with Italian Somaliland in 1960.[5] To this effect, the leaders of Somaliland consider the borders of British-colonised Somaliland as the territorial confines while repudiating the union with mainland Somalia. On 18 May 2021, Somaliland celebrated its 30th year of autonomy from conflict-ridden Somalia.

Like Somaliland, the emergence of the Puntland State of Somalia was the outcome of the 1998 Garowe Constitutional Community Conference in response to the collapse of the national government in Mogadishu. However, unlike Somaliland which seeks independent status as a separate state from Somalia, the leaders of Puntland declared the territory an autonomous regional state within a federated Somalia. The establishment of the Puntland State of Somalia emerged from the Garowe Constitutional Community Conference, held in May 1998.[6] This move

[2] Claire Felter, "Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's breakaway state" *Council for Foreign Relations*, 1 February 2018, accessed 5 September 2021, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/somaliland-horn-africas-breakaway-state.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Michael Hurton, "How Somaliland combats Al Shabaab" Combating Terrorism Centre, Volume 12, Issue 9, November 2019; accessed 10 August 2021 https://www.ctc.usma.edu/somaliland-combats-al-shabaab/.

[5] Italian Somaliland refers to south and central parts of present day Somalia.

[6] British Broadcasting Corporation News, "Puntland Profile" accessed 8 August 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14114727.

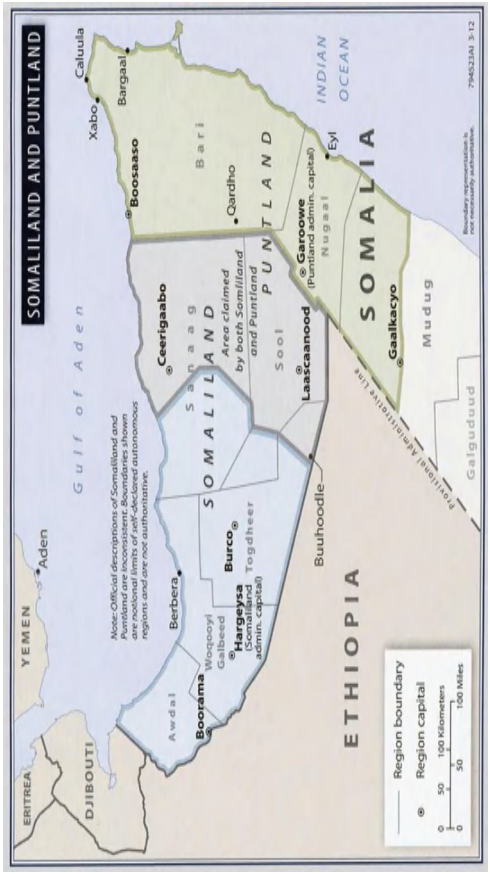

Fig. 10.1 Map Showing Somaliland and Puntland (*Source* Mapsland.com)

was motivated by the need to isolate the region from the violent rivalries between the distinct clans in southern Somalia.

Puntland is located in the northeastern part of Somalia and comprises seven regions notably the Ayn, Bari, Karkaar, Mudug, Nugal, Sanaag, and Sool regions.[7] The administrative capital of Puntland is Garowe, which is located in the Nugaal region while the city of Bosaso is the centre of commercial activities. Puntland has a population of 2.4 million people who speak Somali and Arabic languages.[8] Puntland has a coastline which exceeds 1,600 kilometres and has been a corridor for acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean.[9]

This chapter examines the scourge of terrorism in Somaliland and Puntland beginning with reflections on the trends and perspectives to reviewing the effectiveness of counterterrorism measures in both distinct territories and their specific relations to Somalia. The outcome analysis is contained in the succeeding paragraphs.

Overview of Terrorism in Somaliland and Puntland

Somaliland is a relatively stable territory with very little terrorism inside its borders when compared to countries in the Horn of Africa and the entirety of East Africa.[10] The Government of Somaliland has significantly succeeded in preventing the Harakat Al Shabaab al Mujahideen henceforth referred to as the Al Shabaab to establish effective presence within its territory. However, the Al Shabaab threat in mainland Somalia and neighbouring countries still persists especially in the shared border areas with

[7] Library of Congress, "Somalia: Counterterrorism law proposed in Puntland regional state" accessed 18 August 2021, www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2010-07-23/somalia-counterterrorism-law-proposed-in-puntland-regional-state/.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Tu' emay Aregawi Desta and James Cockayne (eds), *ISSP-CGCC Joint Baseline Study on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism in the IGAD Subregion*, Global Centre on Cooperative Security, May 2021, pp. 33–34; accessed 15 November 2021, https://www.globalcenter.org/publications/issp-cgcc-joint-baseline-study-on-anti-money-laundering-and-countering-the-financing-of-terrorism-in-the-igad-subregion-2/.

[10] Caleb Weiss, "Analysis: Somaliland's lingering jihadi threat" FDD Long war journal, 11 August 2021, accessed 4 October 2021, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/08/analysis-somalilands-lingering-jihadi-threat.php.

Puntland. It is instructive to note that Al Shabaab's first Emir, Ahmed Abdi Godane also known as Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr was born and raised in Hargeisa before migrating to Southern Somalia where he was killed in September 2014.

Three foreign workers including an Italian nurse named Annalena Tonelli and two British teachers were killed in Somaliland's cities of Borama and Sheikh, respectively, in October 2003. Five months later, a Kenyan aid worker, identified as Flora Chepkemoi was killed in the capital city of Hargeisa in March 2004 by Al Qaeda-linked extremists affiliated to the Al Itihas al Islamiyya (AIAI).[11] These killings were perpetrated by the AIAI under the leadership of Aden Hashi Ayro who was a prominent commander of Al Qaeda in East Africa and a co-founder of the Al Shabaab in Somalia. Officials of Somaliland linked Abdi Godane to the 2003 and 2004 killings.

In October 2008, suspected Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda terrorists executed major attacks in Somaliland on the presidential palace, the Ethiopian consulate and offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the capital city of Hargeisa.[12] This led to the intensification of counterterrorism efforts, which included a crackdown of Al Shabaab sympathisers and members within Somaliland. A series of arrests led to a reduction of terrorist attacks in Somaliland, which has been largely absent since 2008. However, the territory still faces a low-level jihadist threat emanating mainly from Puntland as the Al Shabaab is believed to maintain sleeper cells in Somaliland's major towns such as Berbera, Burco, Hargeisa and Berbera.

On the other hand, Puntland is trapped in the web of internecine clan rivalries and piracy at sea which has resulted in the proliferation of anti-piracy militia and clan militia. The security dynamics of Puntland are further heightened by the incidence of drought and famine. The scourge of terrorism and violent extremism adds to the several security threats facing Puntland. Unlike in Somaliland, where Al Shabaab and the Islamic State have failed to establish an active and enduring presence, terrorist groups tend to exercise considerable operational freedom in Puntland where they have unleashed deadly assaults.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Hurton, Op. Cit.

Al Shabaab expanded its presence in Puntland by establishing ties with the Warsangali clan militia under the command of Mohammad Said Atom who pledged allegiance to Al Shabaab in 2010 and served as Al Shabaab's former commander in the Galgala mountains, until his defection in 2014. While announcing his defection in support of the African Union-backed government in Somalia, Mohammed Said Atom stated that he had exhausted his patience with then Al Shabaab leadership under Ahmed Abdi Godane and could no longer tolerate the group's killing of innocent civilians.[13] In February 2016, Qatar made public its intention to provide asylum to Atom.[14]

The Galgala mountain and Cal Miskaat mountains in the Bari region of Puntland continued to provide sanctuary for the ISS in northern Somalia which aids its planning and training activities. The ISS leadership under Abdulkadir Mumin, provides training directions to the recruits on how to enhance combat tactics, hide from drones, kidnap westerners for ransom and how to build their own small quadcopters.[15] It funds its activities from the proceeds of kidnapping for ransom, extortion, smuggling, and illicit taxation imposed on local businesses in areas where its existence is profound.[16]

Puntland's vulnerability to terrorist activities is further aggravated by the inability of the Somalia government in Mogadishu to provide security to the area. Mogadishu's forces are committed to the fight against Al Shabaab in southern and central Somalia and therefore lack forces to help neighbouring Puntland. Since 2015, it is these vulnerabilities that were exploited by the Al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab and its splinter group that formed the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) to heighten their operations in Puntland. The Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) in Puntland seized the Quandala port in the Gulf of Aden in October 2016. In another assault,

[13] Fuad Ahmed and Abdi Moalim, "Somalia: Somalis Welcome, with Sceptism, Surrender of Senior Al Shabaab Leader Atom" *All Africa* 9 June 2014, accessed 21 November 2021, https://allafrica.com/stories/201406100199.html.

[14] Harun Maruf, "Detained Former Al-Shabab Commander says Detetion Political" *Voice of America*, 24 October 2021, accessed 22 November 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/detained-former-al-shabab-commander-says-detention-political/6283642.html.

[15] The Associated Press, "US Military Conducts Airstrikes Against Islamic State Operatives in Somalia" 1 February, 2025, https://www.yahoo.com/news/us-military-conducts-airstrikes-against-205059012.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall (accessed 2 February 2025).

[16] Ibid.

an unidentified suicide bomber carried out attack at a military checkpoint in Bossasso town in Puntland on 23 May 2017 killing four people including two soldiers.[17] Al Shabaab also attacked a military base in the town of Af Urur resulting in the death of over 38 on 8 June 2017.[18]

In October 2015, the ISS established as a breakaway faction of Al Shabaab with its base in Puntland's mountain areas of Golis and Bari and it still remains the only active cell of the Islamic State in Puntland where it recruits, trains and conducts targeted strikes. Other areas in Puntland where the Islamic State has been active are Ali Salehan, Qandala, and Iskushuban. Between 2016 and 2018, the ISS claimed it carried out 25 different operations in Puntland of which 13 were perpetrated in 2018 alone.[19] The ISS also began extorting taxes from businesses based in Puntland in 2018. Furthermore, in March 2021, Al Shabaab militants invaded a jail in Bosaso town, Puntland freeing over 400 prisoners many of whom were Al Shabaab members. Seven soldiers from the semi-autonomous region of Puntland forces were killed during the attack.[20]

Explaining Al Shabaab's incursions into Puntland, Abdiqani Hassan linked them to AMISOM's operations in central Somalia which forced the group to seek safe havens in the Galgala hills area of Puntland which are about 60 miles from Bosaso.[21] It is, however, important to note that despite intermittent air strikes by the United States on Al Shabaab's locations in the Galgala hills, the group still has a strong presence there from which it plans and coordinates attacks in Somalia.

[17] Gardaworld, "Somalia: Suicide bombing in Bossasso (Puntland) May 23, four killed" accessed 4 September 2021, https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/61016/somalia-suicide-bombing-in-bossasso-puntland-may-23-four-killed.

[18] Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Puntland's problems: Its not just Al-Shabab that threatens Somalia's stability" *Brooking*, Monday, 19 June 2017; accessed 19 August 2021, www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/06/19/puntlands-problems/.

[19] European Asylum Support Office (EASO), "COI Query Response" accessed 20 August 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2021356/2019_11_SOMALIA_Query_Security_Situation_Puntland_Somaliland_Q39.pdf.

[20] Abdiqani Hassan, "Al Shabaab militants storm Somali jail, seven soldiers killed" *Reuters*, 21 March 2021; accessed 4 October 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-violence-idUSKBN2AX188.

[21] Ibid.

Scramble Between Somaliland and Puntland

While Somaliland and Puntland continue in their commitments to combat terrorism within their corridors, mutual conflicts erupted on their rival claims over Sool and Sanaag. An understanding of the clan system in Somaliland and Puntland is important to appreciate the area's conflict dynamics. Puntland is organised on the basis of clan and serves as an administration for the Darod/Harti confederation comprising the Majerteen, Warsengeli, and Dhulbahante sub-clans.

Colonial boundaries were responsible for the Isaaq population residing Somaliland on the one hand, as well as for the Darod/Harti confederation to be in Puntland.[22] In addition, because of artificially drawn colonial boundaries, elements of the Sool and Sanaag which are parts of Somaliland are now inhabited by clans indigenous to Puntland. The disputed part of Sool in contest is largely inhabited by the Darold/Harti/Dhulbahante while part of Sanaag in dispute is mostly occupied by the Darold/Harti/Warsengeli but with some Dhulbahante dwelling in Southern part of Sanaag.[23] This overlapping truism is at the root of the competing claims for Sool and Sanaag.

A visit to the contested corridor of Las Anod in 2002 by Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin while campaigning for re-election was considered a direct affront by Puntland, whose troops mounted resistance and attacked the convoy ultimately forcing Rayale's convoy to retreat to the town of Aynabo.[24] Puntland was emboldened by the success of this encounter to take control of Las Anod, a major urban centre and administrative capital of Sool region in 2003 and held sway until 2007 when Somaliland gained advantage in the control of Las Anod.[25] Somaliland acted in collaboration with Ahmed Abdi Haabsade, Puntland's dismissed Minister of Interior and major politician from the Dhulbahante clan to reclaim Las Anod. Subsequently, the dispute over Sool and Sanaag has persisted leading to the militarisation of the affected areas

[22] Ibid.

[23] Omar S Mahmood, "Overlapping Claims by Somaliland and Puntland: The Case of Sool and Sanaag" *Institute of Security Studies East Africa Report 27*, November 2019, p. 6; accessed 27 November 2021, https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Overlapping_claims_by_Somaliland_and_Puntland.pdf.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

leading to violent clashes, which the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) considers as a major concern in the regions.[26]

Since 2018, several clashes have been recorded between Somaliland and Puntland forces that resulted in deaths and human displacements. For instance, in January 2018, Somaliland forces captured Tukaraq, a town in Puntland-controlled Sool and more than 45 persons were killed. In May 2018, another clash occurred between both militaries at Tukaraq and in Las Anod, where another 48 people were killed during the same month.[27] The International Crisis Group (ICG), considered 2018 'an exceptionally violent year' because of clashes between Somaliland and Puntland as both territories experienced about 20 armed confrontations between January and June leading to an estimated 200 to 300 casualties. Between January and May of the same year, another 2,500 civilians were internally displaced by the confrontations between both territories.

In 2019, data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) indicate that a total of 45 security incidents happened in Sool and Sanaag between January and November. This included 35 battles, 8 acts of violence against civilians and 2 explosions.[28] The main security breaches in the regions include:

a. Clashes between Somaliland forces and local militias affiliated with Puntland in Tukaraq on 7 April 2019.
b. Clashes at Badhan led to the death of seven people.
c. Killing of seven persons following clashes near Badhan on 21 May 2019.
d. Clashes between Somaliland and Puntland forces at Badhan and Tukaraq on 14 June 2019 but no casualties were recorded.
e. Killing of 18 civilians following inter-clan violence in the Sanaag region from 7 to 8 July 2019.
f. Killing of 12 persons following inter-clan violence at El-Afwein on 12 August 2019.

[26] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "2019 Humanitarian need overview: Somalia" November 2019, accessed 20 August 2021; https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Somalia_2019_HNO.PDF.

[27] EASO Op. Cit.

[28] Ibid.

Subsequently, the Puntland militia attacked a convoy of Somaliland's government militia in the Sanaag region on 23 August 2019.[29] The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations were able to halt violence within the Sool corridor through an informal fragile ceasefire. Drawing from the armed violence in the disputed territories, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) believes that the mutual conflict between Puntland and Somaliland over Sanaag and Sool fuels instability and human displacements in the area, the Al Shabaab and ISS also seeks to make gains from the conflict.[30]

Official Response to Terrorism in Somaliland and Puntland

As part of its response to the terrorist challenge within its space, the leadership of Somaliland periodically carries out risk assessments to protect domestic order and the assets of citizens and foreigners within its territory. It has a very sophisticated intelligence agency with well-trained and professional personnel that utilises high-tech security equipment for counterterrorism operations and coordinates its operations with international security partners.[31] These official measures were complemented by the establishment of intelligence-gathering capabilities as the activities of militant groups intensified.

Following terror attacks and killings in Somaliland between 2003 and 2004, the government established a Special Protection Unit (SPU) and a police force dedicated to the protection of foreign organisations and their staff. Somaliland also received much technical support from strategic partners such as the United States and Britain. These new security organisations and international support contributed to strengthening security for the protection of lives and property in Somaliland, so much so that the territory attained a status as one of the safest places in Africa. It is however important to note that despite the foreign assistance, counterterrorism engagements in Somaliland have been largely indigenous unlike

[29] Ibid.

[30] United Nations Security Council, "Situation in Somalia" *Report of the United Nations Secretary-General* S/2020/121, 13 February 2020.

[31] Xuseen Xarbi "There is no room of terrorism in Somaliland, but Britain risk assessment must be responded" MSL 28 January 2013; accessed 4 Ocotber 2014, https://maantasomaliland.com/?p=4237.

in Somalia where the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and foreign forces from the United States, Turkey, Kenya and Ethiopia are actively fighting the Al Shabaab and ISIS linked groups non-stop for over a decade.

It is believed that the inability of the Al Shabaab and other terrorist organisations in the Horn of Africa to gain a stronghold in Somaliland has hinged on the capabilities of the Government in Somaliland to effectively police the territory with the effective participation of community members in the governance process. The utility of community engagement helps the government to generate the credible human intelligence (HUMINT) requirements needed to counter militancy while fostering security and quality governance that guarantees support of the citizenry.[32] Stressing the importance of HUMINT in counterterrorism engagements in Somaliland, Bruno Macaes, a non-resident senior fellow of the Hudson Institute asserts that the counterterrorism gains of Somaliland drew largely from the role of the population. In his words:

> Credit for Somaliland's success doesn't belong to the security services. It belongs to the people. No security service can know everything its enemies are up to, but the people are everywhere. They know everything, hear everything, spy on everything. Only the people can become one with the people.[33]

Accounting for the relative success of Somaliland in its counterterrorism engagements against the Al Shabaab, Michael Horton, a counterterrorism expert/Fellow at the Jamestown Foundation, identified a combination of factors which include the existence of responsive government which has earned the trust of the population, the importance of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) which is considered the bedrock of Somaliland's counterterrorism strategy and mass support arising from community engagement in the fight against the Al Shabaab.[34] Prompt notification about new

[32] Horton, Op. Cit.

[33] Bruno Macaes, "How to fight terror, the Somaliland way" *Politico*, 11 April 2018; accessed 10 August 2021, https://www.politico.eu/blogs/the-coming-wars/2018/04/how-to-fight-terror-the-somaliland-way/.

[34] Michael Horton, "No Foothold for Al-Shabaab in Somaliland" *Terrorism Monitor*, 14 August 2020; accessed 10 August 2021, https://jamestown.org/program/no-foothold-for-al-shabaab-in-somaliland/.

potential terrorist arrivals in towns and villages to regional capitals and the national capital in Hargeisa elicits precise and timely responses by the defence and security services especially the police. Despite these robust internal security arrangements, the Government of Britain issued a threat alert to its nationals and foreigners to leave Somaliland in 2013 because of potential risks of terrorist attacks in the territory.[35]

Yet, in understanding the complex security dynamics in the Horn of Africa and how the Somaliland situation feeds the calculus, Ethiopia contends that the Al Shabaab and the ISS utilise Somaliland as a transit route for illicit transnational trafficking across East and the Horn of Africa.[36] This suggests that it is not yet *uhuru* (victory) for the territory as the authorities in Hargeisa are still confronted by intelligence dynamics against the Al Shabaab and other jihadist groups operating in the general area.

For Puntland, the seriousness with counterterrorism measures dates back to July 2010, when the Council of Ministers unanimously approved a counterterrorism bill that established special courts to try perpetrators of suspected acts of terrorism and their accomplices.[37] The proposed bill was quickly passed into law by the parliament and granted broad powers to security agencies with which they utilised to arrest and expel about 500 persons in Bosaso town who were from southern Somalia thereby stimulating human rights concerns.[38] Various human rights issues were raised following the arrest, trial and conviction of the Deputy Director of Horseed Media FM, to 6 years imprisonment on 14 August 2010 for infringing on the anti-terrorism law.[39]

[35] Xarbi, Op. Cit.

[36] Weiss, Op. Cit.

[37] Library of Congress, "Somalia: Counterterrorism Law Proposed in Puntland Regional State" Accessed 5 December 2021, https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2010-07-23/somalia-counterterrorism-law-proposed-in-puntland-regional-state/.

[38] International Commission of Jurists, "Somalia: Puntland Parliament Approves Anti-terrorism Law Creating Special Court" E-Bulletin on Counterterrorism and Human Rights No. 46, September 2010, accessed 5 December 2021, https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/E-Bulletin-Sep10-Final.pdf.

[39] International Commission of Jurists, "Somalia: Journalist convicted under anti-terrorism law for interview with rebel leader" E-Bulletin on Counterterrorism and Human Rights No. 46, September 2010, accessed 5 December 2021, https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/E-Bulletin-Sep10-Final.pdf.

Counterterrorism engagements in Puntland intensified following the reduction of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden, the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF), initially established as a coast guard militia to secure Puntland maritime areas, emerged an all-purpose force for political and clan rivalries under Puntland's former leader, Abdirahman Farole. In 2013, the PMPF also raided Al Shabaab locations in the Galgala hills with the support of the United States but failed to dislodge the group, which responded by entering an alliance with pirates in the Puntland area to finance its operations. Fortunately, the decline of sea piracy off the coast of Puntland has diminished the effectiveness of this alliance.

In June 2017, Puntland sentenced some members of the Al Shabaab who were captured on 26 April 2012 while attempting to unleash a severe bomb attack in Bosaso. This sentence is believed to have resulted in retaliatory attacks by Al Shabaab on the Af Urin military base in June 2017. The authorities in Puntland also executed 21 Al Shabaab members through firing squad after their conviction for terrorism in three separate trials held at Galkayo, Garowe and Qardho towns in June 2021. The men were convicted for their involvement in a series of assassinations and attacks spanning more than a decade that resulted in the killing of several regional and community leaders, security personnel, and journalists.[40]

The administration of Puntland has also come under immense criticism from Abdisamad Mohamed Galan, a former Governor of the Bari region who is considered a fierce critic in Puntland. So far, while no links has been established between Galan and terrorist groups, his criticisms are not only considered as distractions to the local administration in Puntland but also as dangerous narratives that alienate the local clans from the government.

It is important to note that the extent to which the Government and peoples of Somaliland will go in halting the penetration of the Al Shabaab and ISS remains uncertain as both terrorist organisations have continued to demonstrate immense resilience. The resilience of these terrorist groups could be explained by internal and external factors. For instance, the conflicts between Somaliland and Puntland over control of the disputed corridors in Sool and Sanaag tended to dissipate energies and resources

[40] Harun Maruf and Abdiwahid Moalim Ishaq, "Somalia executes militants amid deadly attack" Voice of America (VOA) News, 27. June 2021, accessed 4 October 2021, https://www.voanews.com/africa/somalia-executes-militants-amid-deadly-attack.

that would have been devoted to sustained counterterrorism. Furthermore, concerns over the resilience of Al Shabaab and the Islamic State in Somalia are of importance in view of the depth of resilience associated with jihadi aspirations and aggression globally. This line of thinking is further reinforced by the unfolding withdrawal of AMISOM from Somalia as the African Union implement the exit strategy which ought to have led to the total withdrawal of AMISOM since 2020 as earlier projected.

However, despite initial successes in counterterrorism engagements in Puntland, the Islamic State's main base in Dhaadaar are yet to be dislodged and serves continued to serve as base for the groups assaults on Puntland. Between February and December 2023, the ISS engaged the Al Qaeda *katiba* or cell of the Al Shabaab in intense struggle for supremacy in Puntland, which resulted to ISS acquisition of villages in the Bali district of autonomous Puntland.[41] It is anticipated that these relative successes recorded could enhance its contributions to Islamic State's global funding and operations.

In May 2024, its leader, Sheikh Abdulkadir Mumin survived airstrikes by United States forces in the Dhaadaar area; and five militant bases in the eastern Cal-Miskaal mountain area have been destroyed. The presence of the ISS in Puntland became more pronounced following its execution of a complex terrorist attack at a military base in Bari region of Puntland on 31 December 2024, using the combination of Suicide Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (SVBIED) and Suicide Vests (SVEST). The core objective of the attack, considered the first sophisticated offensive since 2017 when the group besieged the regional port capital Bosaso was to forestall military operations by the Puntland Security Forces (PSF) that could disrupt ISS support zones in the Cal Miskaad mountains especially its logistics flows.[42] Local media reports estimates that about 18 security forces and nine ISS fighters were killed in the attack.[43] The offensive

[41] Aaron Y Zelin, "The Islamic State on the March in Africa" *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Brief Analysis*, 1 March 2024, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/islamic-state-march-africa (accessed 12 January 2025).

[42] Kathryn Tyson and Liam Karr, "Africa File, January 9, 2025: Islamic State Suicide Attack in Somalia: AUSSOM Dysfunction; M23 Captures District Capital in Eastern DRC" *Institute for the Study of Wars,* 9 January 2025, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/africa-file-january-9-2025-islamic-state-suicide-attack-somalia-aussom-dysfunction-m23 (accessed 12 January 2025).

[43] Ibid.

capabilities of the ISS in the region has been enhanced by the influx of foreign fighters over the years.[44] Figure 10.2 shows the financing network of the ISS.

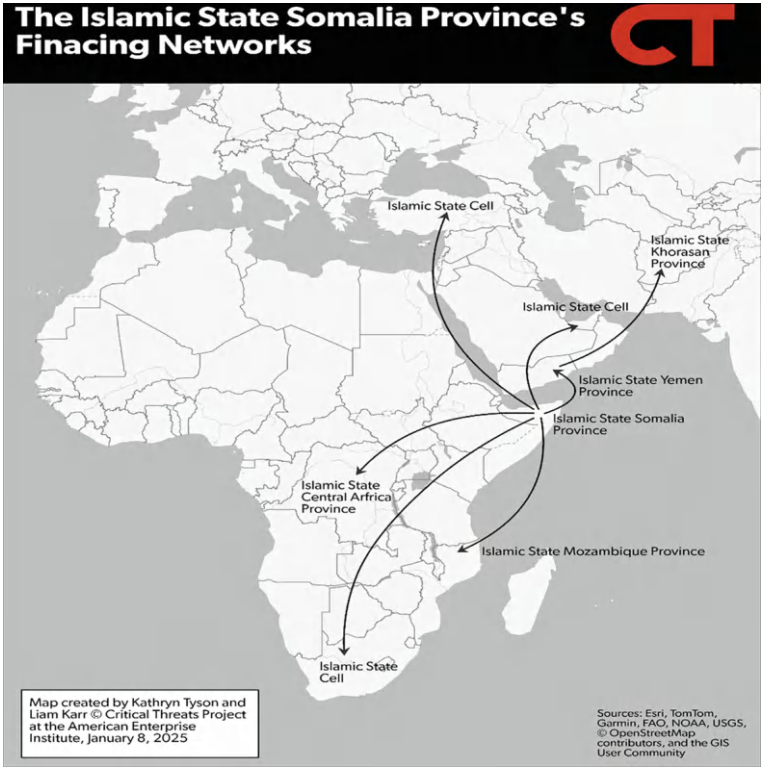
The Islamic State Somalia Province's Finacing Networks
CT
Islamic State Cell
Islamic State Khorasan Province
Islamic State Cell
Islamic State Yemen Province
Islamic State Somalia Province
Islamic State Central Africa Province
Islamic State Mozambique Province
Islamic State Cell
Map created by Kathryn Tyson and Liam Karr © Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute, January 8, 2025
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Fig. 10.2 Showing the Financing Network of Islamic State of Somalia[45] (*Source* Kathryn Tyson and Liam Karr [2024])

[44] SITE Intelligence Group, "IS Claims Major Suicide Raid Involving Fighters of 7 Nationalities on Somali Military Camp in Puntland," January 1, 2025, available by subscription at www.siteintelgroup.com; https://shabellemedia.com/death-toll-from-deadly-isis-attack-in-puntland-rises-to-18-injuries-climb-to-30/.

[45] Kathryn Tyson and Liam Karr (2024).

The frequency and sophistication of ISS attacks in Puntland are expected to reduce for two main reasons. The group exists as a regional command and control of the Islamic State global in addition to hosting its East Africa office et al. *Karrar*. This office generates huge funds annually from extortion and illegal taxes and leverages on the mountainous nature of the region to serve as logistics channels for the Islamic State global while providing funding and training supports to other Islamic State in Africa and beyond. These two reasons suggest that the groups reduce its visibility to enable it to consolidate and bolster its relevance to the Islamic State worldwide.

The strategic importance of the ISS to the global operation of the Islamic State is reinforced by the confirmations by both the United States and United Nations that the Al Karrar office transfers funds to the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) in Afghanistan through its operatives in South Africa.[46] In addition, multiple attacks and recruitment cells of the ISS have been disrupted by the Swedish security services while its leaders play active roles in the Islamic State Global Directorate of Provinces (ISGDPs) to coordinate IS external attacks.[47] The tactical and operational capabilities of the ISS are further bolstered by the active participation of foreign fighters.[48] It therefore became strategic for the ISS not to stimulate widespread attention that could generate full counterterrorism offensives against the group in Puntland that could hinder its large global support to the Islamic State worldwide.

Drawing from the external front, especially the successful recapture of Kabul in Afghanistan by the Taliban forces in August 2021, the resilience of the Al Shabaab and ISS in Somalia would naturally have been rekindled. This is not unexpected as the western-backed Government in Afghanistan under former President Ashraf Ghani was forced to flee into exile because the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) were unable to neither successfully repel nor crush the Taliban fighters. The immediate build-up to the eventual capture of Kabul followed President Joe Biden's announcement in April 2021 that United States military will completely

[46] Institute for the Study of Wars, *Op. Cit*., 2025.

[47] The European Conservatist, "Somali Imam Arrested in Sweden on Terrorism Charges" https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/May/196101/somali_imam_arrested_in_sweden_on_terrorism_charges.aspx (accessed 12 January 2025).

[48] https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/islamic-state-march-africa (accessed 12 January 2025).

pull out of Afghanistan by September 2021 and this pronouncement was backed by quickened action.[49] By July 2021, an estimated 95% of US forces in Afghanistan had been pulled out with only 650 troops on ground to protect the US Embassy and other assets.[50] It is reasoned that the exit of the US troops created room for the Taliban rebels to assume leadership in the country after 20 years of sustained armed resistance against the United States and her allies. Relating this to the planned exit of the AMISOM from Somalia, it is speculated that the Al Shabaab and ISS could draw inspiration from the Taliban pseudo-fortune in Afghanistan to boost morale of fighters with the hope of springing another Taliban-styled quasi victory in Somalia area covering Somaliland and Puntland.

Conclusion

Somaliland and Puntland are important territories when considering the political evolution of Somalia. Both territories are integral part of the post-colonial independent Somalia and only sought increased autonomy and independence following the collapse of the Somali state in 1991. While Somaliland declared its independence in 1991 despite the lack of international recognition, Puntland did not declare independence but sought relative autonomy as a federated unit under a unified Somalia.

Regarding security, the bulk of terrorist aggression by the Al Shabaab is targeted in central and southern Somalia. In Somaliland, the population, in collaboration with the Government, works in concert to degrade the presence and activities of terrorist groups to the extent that Somaliland is considered free of terrorism. However, the relative stability experienced in Somaliland is still vulnerable to terrorist assaults, reliable sources indicate that dormant cells of the Al Shabaab are present in major Somaliland cities. While Somaliland is relatively free of terrorism, some active cells of the AIAI and Al Shabaab operate in Puntland and Al Shabaab continuously seeks to penetrate local clans in Somaliland with its extremist narrative targeting the aggrieved clans.

[49] Council for Foreign Relations, "Global Conflict Tracker" accessed 5 December 2021, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-afghanistan.

[50] Ibid.

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CHAPTER 11

State and Terrorist Threats in Uganda

Charlotte Mafumbo, C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, and Zaid Sekito

Introduction

Uganda is a landlocked country located in East Africa and lies across the equator, about 931.6 kilometres inland from the Indian Ocean. It shares borders with Kenya in the East; South Sudan in the North; Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the West; Tanzania in the South; and Rwanda in the South West. It has a total area of 241,038 square kilometres, of which the land area covers 200,523 square kilometres.[1]

[1] Republic of Uganda, "Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2019 Statistical Abstract" https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/01_20202019_Statistical_Abstract_-Final.pdf- (accessed 14 December 2021).

C. Mafumbo (✉) · Z. Sekito
Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Makerere University Kampala, Kampala, Uganda
e-mail: charlotte.mafumbo@mak.ac.ug

Z. Sekito
e-mail: zaid.sekito@mak.ac.ug

C. N.-E. Okereke
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria

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Open water bodies covered 37,495.81 square kilometres while wetlands covered 7,154.81 square kilometres, and land area was 196,906.34 square kilometres.[2]

By November 2021, the population of Uganda was estimated to be 47,660,438 according to World Meter's elaboration of the latest United Nations data.[3] Uganda's population growth rate is currently 3.32%, which is attributed to the country's fertility rate of 4.78 births per woman. This translates into one million people who are added to the population each year.[4] In terms of ethnic composition, Uganda comprises of the Baganda who constitutes 16.5%, Banyankole 9.6%, Basoga 8.8%, Bakiga 7.1%, and Iteso 7%. Others are the Langi 6.3%, Bagisu 4.9%, Acholi 4.4%, Lugbara 3.3%, and other groups estimated at 32.1%.[5] Prior to the 2005 constitutional amendment when Kiswahili became the second official language, English was the Uganda's only official language. However, Luganda is the second largely spoken language after English.[6]

Uganda also shares ethnic communities with Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Sudan. The colonial powers had drawn boundary demarcations in 1894 that divided these ethnic communities with some settling in one state directly opposite from their relatives that settled in the opposite neighbouring state. Uganda, Rwanda, and the DRC also share geographic features that are critical to each state. The Mugahinga forest, an extremely vital forest, extends into Rwanda, Uganda, and the DRC but with the biggest share of the forest on the DRC side. The Ituri forest which is equally critical extends to Aru near Uganda's border. The Virunga Mountains, which are covered by dense forests, also extend across all three countries. These ecosystems are critical to the security of the region.

Historically, terrorism in Uganda can be traced to 1976 hostage incident at Entebbe airport when Uganda was considered an accomplice with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) army to land a

[2] Ibid.

[3] https:/www.worldometers.info/world-population/Uganda-population.

[4] https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/Uganda-population.

[5] Luganda is the language spoken by the Baganda ethnic group but because Baganda chiefs were taken as administrators in other parts of Uganda by the British colonialists, Luganda continued to spread widely.

[6] CIAWorldFactBook,"Uganda" accessed 2November2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uganda/

hijacked plane at Entebbe Airport. The plane had many nationalities but the central focus was those from Israel. This led to a retaliatory attack on Uganda by commandos from the Israeli elite *Sayeret Matkal* unit that raided Entebbe airport to rescue the hostages.[7] Subsequently, terrorism in Uganda was only alluded to by labelling any insurgent, rebel or resisting groups as terrorists. Several of these persons were former Ugandan soldiers under Idi Amin, that fled the country following the overthrow of Amin in 1979 from where they launch attacks with the hope of taking power back by putting pressure on the subsequent governments.

Uganda's history of terrorism is accentuated by terrorist acts perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Al Shabaab al Mujahidin and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) all of which perpetrate cross-border attacks on the government and peoples of Uganda. The activities of these terrorist groups have since the late 1980s emerged as national security priorities of President Museveni's administration since its ascension to power in January 1986. This chapter examines the dynamics of terrorism and counterterrorism in Uganda. It argues that terrorism in Uganda is rooted in the country's domestic political trajectory and its vulnerability to cross-border infiltration by armed groups from neighbouring countries who resort to terrorist acts with the hope of heightening insecurities and capturing power. It therefore examines the trends and dynamics of terrorism in the country as well as official measures adopted by the Government of Uganda working at national and regional levels as well as in partnership with the larger international community on counterterrorism.

Overview of Terrorism in Uganda

Like some of its neighbours in East Africa, Uganda has since the late 1990s experienced terrorist attacks perpetrated by various armed groups notably the ADF and Lord's Resistance Army which ordinarily would have been described as rebels or insurgents. However, they have been classified as terrorists because of the modes of operation deployed and the nature of atrocities they perpetrated.

[7] Judah Ari Gross, "Entebbe in Person: A new oral history challenges official account of 1976 rescue" *The Times of Israel* 23 August 2021, https://www.timesofisrael.com/entebbe-in-person-a-new-oral-history-challenges-official-account-of-1976-rescue/ (accessed 12 March 2022).

Cities and towns in the western notably; Fort Portal City, Kabarole, Kasese, and Bundibugyo towns have been hit by the Allied Democratic Front (ADF), which is a rebel group based in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). For instance, on 16 August 1997, the ADF attacked and abducted 19 young seminarians and two staff members of the St John's Catholic Seminary in Kiburara as well as students from the Mitande School in Kabarole.[8] The ADF further infiltrated Uganda's western border and attacked the Kichwamba Technical Institute located in Kabarole district on 11 June 1998. This attack was characterised by the burning of the school hostel and a resultant death of over 80 students before the terrorists retreated back to their base in eastern DRC.[9] Further cross-border terrorist attacks on Uganda were also perpetrated in March 1999 by the Liberation Army of Rwanda (ALIR) comprising of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda but fled to DRC. These individuals intermittently infiltrated Uganda through the Southwest borders to attack foreign tourists in Bwindi National Park in the bid to punish the United States, Britain, New Zealand, and Uganda for their support to the post-genocide Government in Rwanda. The ALIR abducted about 20 tourists and forced them into the Congo forests where two Americans, four Britons and two New Zealanders were brutally killed with axes while one Ugandan tour guide was burnt to death.

The Ugandan Government responded with the establishment of the Special Wildlife Tourism Intervention Force (SWIFT), composed of personnel from the UPDF and the Uganda Wildlife Authority to provide security for tourists, guard and guide the wildlife parks against infiltration by terrorists. In September 2014, the Ugandan Police Force issued a communique guaranteeing the safety and security of the tourism industry following the eruption of fatal communal violence in the western districts

[8] Human Rights Watch, "HRW condemns deadly attack by Ugandan rebels on school children" *Monitor*, 10 June 1998,https://www.hrw.org/news/1998/06/10/hrw-condemns-deadly-attack-ugandan-rebels-school-children (accessed 15 March 2022).

[9] United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "Uganda" The Allied Defence Forces (ADF), involvement in terrorist activities and relationship with the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government" *Refworld*, 1 March 1999, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3170.html (accessed 14 March 2022).

of Kasese, Bundibugyo, and Ntoroko surrounding the Mountain Rwenzori National Park.[10] The tourism police, a unit under the Counter Terrorism Directorate is tasked to protect tourist attractions such as the national parks including popular city hangouts and hotels that attract foreign tourists and high profile personalities.[11]

Following Uganda's intervention in Zaire which saw the overthrow of the late Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997, Laurent Desire Kabila who took power renamed the country Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Initially, the relationship between the two countries was good but following the clash of interests between Kabila and his erstwhile friends, Museveni and Kagame, Kabila delinked himself and sought new bilateral and regional relations in Southern Africa states and Southern African Development Community (SADC). By this time, the rebels, insurgents, or dissidents that had been trained in Sudan had formed themselves into the ADF.[12] In interviews held in 2005 with UPDF officials and follow-up interviews on November 21, 2021, it was argued that the rebels inhabiting forests in the DRC took advantage of Uganda's permeable borders and the forest terrain to launch terror attacks on Uganda. By 1997, the ADF had thrown handheld grenades in pubs in Slow Boat (Kampala Road) and Isabella Pub in Makindye, a suburb in Kampala among others.

By 1998, the ADF had advanced from the use of handheld grenades to Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and in that year alone, the group detonated a total of 48 IEDs in Kampala, Jinja and other parts, killing 82 and wounding 236 others. A total of 184 ADF rebels were arrested, and 125 were charged with terrorism.[13] Some of the terrorists were given

[10] Fred Enanga, "Police Guarantees Safety and Security of the Tourism Industry" Press Statement of the Uganda Police Force, 16 July 2014; https://www.upf.go.ug/press-statement-police-guarantees-safety-security-tourism-industry/ (accessed 24 July 2022).

[11] Andrew Bagala, "Uganda: Police to Guard Tourist Hangout" *The Monitor*, 21 January 2019, https://allafrica.com/stories/201901210255.html (accessed 24 July 2022).

[12] It is not very certain when ADF started but in a very recent article it has been argued that they were formed in 1995 and received logistical support and training in 1996 after which they started to launch attacks on Uganda. A detailed account is provided by Charles Etukuri and John B. Thauuite. (2021) "A Glimpse into the life of the Running of a Secretive Jihad Armed Group" in The New Vision, Vol. 15 no. 47, pp. 4–5.

[13] According to Brigadier David Robert Gonyi, IEDs are manmade bombs that are assembled by the ADF (using ammonium, water pipes, nails and fertilisers). These lethal

amnesty following President Yoweri Museveni signing the Amnesty Act of 2000.

When the embassies of the United States of America (USA) were bombed in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salam, Tanzania on 7 August of 1998, Uganda had long suffered terrorist attacks and had been advancing towards addressing terrorism in multiple ways. In 2001, the ADF struck again using the IEDs to hit the Taxi Park on Ben Kiwanuka Street (Kikubo: a very busy commercial centre). Following the arrest of Bazakura, the commander of ADF in the badly executed bomb, it was realised that he had tried to detonate the IED but because of the poor timing, it had burst and injured him and others. Bazakura further provided security agencies more information on how the ADF operated.[14]

In July 2010, another group known as Al Shabaab unleashed a lethal attack on Kampala during the finals of the World Cup Soccer Championship held in South Africa leading to the death of 77 persons. The nationality of the victims included Ugandans, Ethiopians, Irish woman, and one Asian.[15] The group had individuals trained to make bombs and among them were; Rashid Kawawa, a bomb expert, Jimmy and Ibrahim Magara. Investigations revealed that the terrorists exploited the porous Uganda-Kenya border to smuggle items used in the attacks.[16] In 2016, five of the suspects were sentenced to life imprisonment while two others were sentenced to 50 years imprisonment each for their respective roles in the attack.[17] This conviction was the first of such outside Somalia.

Further threats of terrorism in Uganda manifested in July 2014 following police alert of impending terror attacks at Entebbe International Airport and various targets within Kampala which included; hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, shopping malls, diplomatic missions, the Parliament, transportation hubs, religious institutions, government offices, and

explosives are assembled and have to be detonated in exactly one hour (interview held on 24/1/2022).

[14] Ibid.

[15] British Broadcasting Corporation news online, 27 May 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-36400842 (accessed 19 March 2022).

[16] Charles Etukuri and John B. Thauuite (2021) "A Glimpse into the Life of the Running of a Secretive Jihad Armed Group" in *The New Vision*, Vol. 15, No. 47, pp. 4–5.

[17] Ibid.

public transportation.[18] Although this anticipated attack was averted, the Uganda police arrested 19 persons outside a shopping mall in Kampala for complicity in a planned imminent bomb attack.[19]

In October 2021, the city of Kampala experienced terrorist attacks by suspected ADF fighters following a deadly explosion at a restaurant in the Komamboga area. A suicide bomber blew up himself in a bus along the Kampala-Masaka highway.[20] Further suicide attacks targeting the Central police station and parliament buildings were perpetrated in mid-November which led to the death of over three persons while 33 others were injured.[21] President Museveni described the attackers as "manipulated and confused" youths who were hunted down by the security forces in the months since a failed assassination bid of a top government official.[22] The security forces killed an Islamic cleric identified as Sheikh Muhammad Abas Kirevu for allegedly recruiting and maintaining a local cell for ADF fighters in the Kampala neighbourhood. Another Muslim cleric, Sheikh Suleiman Nsubuga was declared wanted for training of terrorists, radicalising potential recruits and providing materials to make IEDs.[23]

Furthermore, as part of police operations, a total of 21 suspects with links to the ADF were arrested for terrorist activities from ADF cells established at Mpererwe, Lweza, Luweero, Ntoroko, and Bundibugyo in November 2021. In addition, the UPF also intercepted and neutralised a group of four ADF suspects in Ntoroko engaged in the recruitment and logistical coordination network at Bundibugyo and Ntoroko

[18] Alan Cowell, "U.S Embassy in Uganda warns of 'specific threat' to airport" *New York*, 3 July 2014. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/04/world/africa/us-embassy-in-uganda-airport.html (accessed 18 March 2022).

[19] Isaac Kasamani, "Ugandan arrest 19 linked to 'imminent' terror attack" *NBC News* 14 September 2014 http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/uganda-arrests-19-linked-imminent-terror-attack-n203046 (accessed 18 March 2022).

[20] Al Jazeera News, "Uganda's capital Kampala hit by deadly suicide bombings" *Al Jazeera news*" 17 November 2021, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/16/ganda (accessed 18 March 2022).

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Patience Atuhaire, "Uganda's Kampala bombings: Muslim cleric accused of jihadist links shot dead" *British Broadcasting Corporation* News, 18 November 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-59337953 (accessed 18 March 2022).

Districts.[24] The four terrorists, namely, Atindya Yassin aka Senabulya Dan, Byaruhanga Musa Bahemuka, Turikimanya Joshua Mathias and Bagonza Joseph were linked to the 5th Commander in the ADF hierarchy known as Muhammad Luminsa. A communique issued by the Uganda Police Force notes that:

> During the disruptive operations, our teams recovered three sets of IEDs from the residences of Matovu Adam aka Manhaji from Ttula Kawempe, Mugamba Moses Mudasiru aka Kalyowa aka Moze, from Katooke Nansana, and Muwonge Yusuf from Kireka Biira. All the IEDs were successfully detonated by the bomb squad. In addition, an AK-47 Rifle, was recovered from the ADF cell in Paidha from Warom Felix.[25]

The implication of renewed terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Kampala and its environs is that active terrorist groups exist beyond the country's border area and have developed potent cells in the capital city of Kampala.

The scourge of terrorism in Uganda continues to stimulate varying explanations. It has been partly attributed to the security dilemma occasioned by its geo-strategic location in a regional neighbourhood comprising of states with intractable conflicts.[26] This has often put it in a precarious situation and increased its security dilemma. For instance, since its independence in 1960, the DRC which is Uganda's neighbour to the West has had intractable conflicts of which the spillover effects were felt in Uganda. Likewise, the effects of Uganda's internal political conflicts were also felt in the DRC which became the permanent gateway for the terrorist groups particularly those fighting Uganda like ADF and the LRA. The DRC has perceived Uganda as a conduit of the DRC insurgent groups. These suspicions and those of other neighbours have put Uganda in a precarious situation in the late 1990s through 2004.

The relations between Uganda and Sudan were significantly complicated for over a decade such that by 1986 onwards. Uganda had harboured the John Garang's Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army

[24] Fred Enanga, "Update on the Ongoing Counter Terror Operations" Press Statement of the Uganda Police Force,18 November 2021, https://www.upf.go.ug/update-on-the-ongoing-counter-terror-operations/ (accessed 23 July 2022).

[25] Ibid.

[26] Charlotte Mafumbo, "Interventionist Foreign Policy: Uganda's Security Challenges A Study" Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, 2008, available at: https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/1142/3743, pp. 221–222.

(SPLA), which was one of Sudan's former rebel groups. In retaliation, Sudan harboured, supported, and armed Uganda's rebel groups. Uganda's southwest neighbour, Rwanda had by the early 1990s been drawn into a protracted leadership war between the Hutu-led dominated Government in Kigali and minority Tutsi exiles. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) used Uganda as a base to launch its attacks on Rwanda on October 1, 1990, and this was again a breach of International Law. In reciprocity, the then Rwandan government of Juvenal Habyarimana harboured some Ugandan rebels fighting the Museveni-led Government in Kampala. The victory of the RPF in July 1994 and eventual overthrow of the Hutu-dominated regime in Kigali tended to normalise the relations between Uganda and Rwanda as both countries collaborated largely against their mutual security dilemma thereafter.

Uganda's geo-strategic location and shared borders with the DRC, South Sudan, and Kenya have made her very cautious in conduct of diplomatic relations with her contiguous neighbours. In Kenya, access to Uganda's eastern border by cattle rustlers provided an alternative route for the LRA and its earlier related female led insurgent group called the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) of Alice Lakwena.[27] The sum total of this geo-strategic location meant that Uganda would have to step up its vigilance in protecting itself as well as equip itself with the requisite military capacities to overrun the terrorists. However, Uganda's attempts and direct entry into the DRC to find its enemies have been interpreted as "breach" of international law and a direct disrespect to the regional security frameworks agreed to by the Great Lakes Region (GLR), save for the current deployment based on the mutual agreement.

Major Terrorist Groups Threatening Uganda

The three main terrorist groups threatening the security and stability of Uganda are ADF, LRA, and the Al Shabab al Mujahidin. The ADF was formed in the eastern DRC following an agreement reached between some members of elements of Uganda's National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) and some elements of Uganda's Tabliq Islamic sect

[27] The leader of the HSM, Alice Lakwena had started the rebellion to overthrow Museveni. She used rituals in the war and the rebellion was considered akin to the Kingigil Ngwale of the Maji Maji rebellion against the colonialists in Tanganyika between 1905 and 1907.

with the objective of fighting the Yoweri Museveni's regime in Africa.[28] Its membership comprises largely of persons of Ugandan nationals. The then Government of Sudan provided some technical training and logistical support to the ADF in retaliation for Museveni. The ADF narrative leans towards the Salafi doctrine, but however still recruits along ethnic and secular lines. The Islamic State assumed responsibility of the ADF and styled it with a new name the Islamic State of Central Africa Province.[29]

The LRA is considered as one of Africa's oldest rebel groups. It was established in 1988 by Joseph Kony, having earlier emerged from the remnants of the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) founded by Alice Auma Lakwena, a priestess and distant relative of Joseph Kony, to overthrow the Museveni government in Uganda and introduce a new government based on the 10 Commandments of the Christian faith while also restoring honour to the Acholi ethnic group in northern Uganda.[30] The activities of the LRA were however largely contrary to the tenets of these commandment as they were quite often characterised by horrendous acts of terrorism against civilians involving; torture, rape, mutilation and murder against defenceless civilians including abducting thousands of underaged children used as sex slaves and child soldiers. This informed the action by the International Criminal Court at The Hague to issue International Warrant of Arrest for five LRA leaders namely; Joseph Kony -who has since been convicted of 61 crimes against humanity and war crimes, Vincent Otti, Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen in October 2005.[31]

The evolution of the LRA is rooted in Uganda's political trajectory especially the power tussle between the Acholi ethnic group in northern Uganda and political leaders in southern Uganda dating back to Idi Amin Dada's regime (1971–1979). Although the Acholi had held power after the overthrow of Idi Amin, the advent of the Museveni era in 1986, reignited the Acholi rebellion forcing many Acholi fighters to flee back to

[28] Jared Thompson, "Examining Extremism: Allied Democratic Forces" Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 29 July 2021, https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-allied-democratic-forces (accessed 17 March 2022).

[29] Ibid.

[30] National Counterterrorism Centre, "Lord's Resistance Army" *Counterterrorism Guide: Terrorist Groups*, https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/lra.html (n.d.).

[31] International Criminal Court, "Warrant of Arrest unsealed against five LRA Commanders" *Press Release* 14 October 2005.

their region in northern Uganda. Alice Lakwena mobilised the HSM in 1986 with the objective of overthrowing the Museveni-led Government. Born from a conviction that the Acholi troops in the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA) have stained the reputation of Acholi community through defeat and convinced that the Acholi never surrender, she sought purification for the Acholi's and mobilised presumably "pure and clean Acholi youths' to redeem the Acholi nation through the HSM.[32] The HSM was however surrounded and destroyed by Museveni forces in the Bugambe forest in Magamaga near Jinja in 1988 forcing Alice Lakwena to escape to Kenya where she later on died in January 2007, and from its ashes emerged the Joseph Kony's LRA.

In 2008, the defence forces of DRC, South Sudan and Uganda launched a joint military offensive code named, "Operation Lightning Thunder" after Joseph Kony declined to sign a United Nations negotiated peace agreement brokered by former President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique in his capacity as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the LRA-Affected Areas.[33] The wide-ranging agreement was expected to usher in a permanent resolution of the conflict but ultimately dashed when the LRA leader failed to appear at the agreed spot near Ri-Kwanga, on the Sudan-Congo border.[34]

The Congress of the United States passed the "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act in May 2010. This complemented the initial inclusion of the LRA on the Terrorist Exclusion List in 2001 by the United States Department of State and subsequent designation of Joseph Kony as a Specially Designated Terrorist under Executive Order 13,324 in 2008. In October 2011, the US Pentagon deployed a force of 100 military personnel in an advisory role to regional militaries with the objective of neutralising Kony fighters from the battle ground.

[32] GlobalSecurity,"AliceLakwena'sHolySpiritMovement" https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/hsm.htm (accessed 17 March 2022).

[33] United Nations, "After failure to reach peace deal in northern Uganda, UN envoy tries fresh tack" *UN News*, 14 April 2008, https://news.un.org/en/story/2008/04/255962-after-failure-reach-peace-deal-northern-uganda-un-envoy-tries-fresh-tack (accessed 17 March 2022).

[34] Mike Tran, "Ugandan rebel leader fails to sign peace deal" The G*uardian* 11 April 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/11/uganda (accessed 17 March 2022).

On its part, the Harakat Al Shabaab al Mujahidin was established as the youth wing of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in Somalia which sought to enthrone and sustain an Islamic caliphate in the country and beyond. It later emerged as an insurgent group in Somalia after the defeat of the UIC by Ethiopian troops in 2006. The Al Shabaab enforced harsh Sharia codes on the population such as prohibiting shaving of beard, consumption of alcohol, the chewing of khat, and the censorship of certain music and movies. It further enforced amputation of thieves and stoning of adulterers.[35]

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was established in 2007 to replace Ethiopian troops that dislodged the UIC, and it has so far sustained the campaigns to halt Al Shabaab's aggression against the local Somali population and internationally recognised government in the country. The Museveni government was the first country to deploy troops for AMISOM operations and it maintains the largest contingent of regional forces. Other Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) of AMISOM are Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. Yet, despite the presence of the AMISOM, the Al Shabab has repeatedly demonstrated its capabilities to execute devastating attacks across East Africa with attendant humanitarian crises.

In July 2010, the Al Shabaab unleashed its first twin terrorist attacks outside Somalia on Kampala leaving a toll of 77 deaths with a message that "we are sending a message to every country who is willing to send troops to Somalia that they will face attacks on their territory. In keeping to its threats, the Al Shabaab has launched several attacks on Kenya, including the attack on Westgate Mall, Nairobi in September 2013 resulting in 67 deaths and another at the Garissa University in April 2015 leading to 148 deaths.[36] However, as the AMISOM and it strategic partners intensified offensive in Somalia, the Al Shabaab suffered losses of some previously held strategic strongholds such as the port cities of Barawe and Kismayo. While international efforts are being made to achieve the exit of the AMISOM, Uganda and other countries in East Africa have continued to strengthen counterterrorism efforts at national and regional levels.

[35] Claire Felter, Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al Shabab" Council for Foreign Relations, 19 May 2021, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab#chapter-title-0-4 (accessed 19 March 2022).

[36] Ibid.

Uganda's Official Counterterrorism Response

Uganda's response to terrorism has been multifaceted like several other countries threatened by terrorism. The Government of Uganda has embarked on several counterterrorism measures at the national level. These include the establishment of requisite institutions for security, enactment of relevant legislations, law enforcement processes, and the deployment of kinetic military operations as well as diplomatic engagements at bilateral and multilateral levels within and beyond the immediate East Africa region.

The Government of Uganda first embarked on law enforcement through the police and other security agencies such as customs and immigration as well as intelligence gathering, military operations and diplomatic engagements. In the sphere of law enforcement, the Government of Uganda relies on legal frameworks and the criminal justice system to combat terrorism. To this effect, the national parliament enacted several laws which aid the activities of the police and intelligence community to identify, apprehend, and facilitate the prosecution of suspected terrorists.[37] For instance, in June 2000, the parliament of Uganda acting in accordance with Article 219 of the country's Constitution passed the National Security Council Act, which established a National Security Council as an advisory body to the President on all matters relating to national security and other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.[38]

Furthermore, prior to the September 11th 2001 attacks by Al Qaeda at the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York and the Pentagon, Uganda prosecuted acts of terrorism perpetrated by the ADF and LRA as capital offences under the Penal Code Act. However, with the adoption of Resolution 1317 by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the Government of Uganda enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act in June 2002. The objective of this Act is to suppress acts of terrorism and provide for the punishment of persons who plan, instigate, support, finance, or execute acts of terrorism. The Act also

[37] Henry Isoke, "The dilemma of porous borders: Uganda's experience in combating terrorism" being thesis submitted to the Naval Postgraduate School, Montreal, California in December 2015.

[38] UgandaLegalInformationInstitute, "NationalSecurityCouncilAct2000" https://old.ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/301 (accessed 18 March 2022).

proscribed terrorist organisations and provides for the punishment of persons who are members of, or who profess in public to be members of, or who convene or attend meetings of, or who support or finance or facilitate the activities of terrorist organisations.[39] The Act further makes provisions for the investigation of acts of terrorism and obtaining information in respect of such acts. It further authorises the interception of the correspondence of and the surveillance of persons suspected to be planning or to be involved in acts of terrorism; and to provide for other connected matters.[40]

The imperative for the Act was informed by the challenge of handling terrorists that were arrested in the absence of no legal clear definition to guide the profiling of criminals arrested for terrorist acts. There was no adequate legal definition that could be used. This Act was, however, criticised by sections of the population as an instrument for stifling political opposition and often trumpeted concerns of human rights protection and its inability to clearly distinguish between ordinary criminal acts and universally accepted acts of terrorism.[41]

In response to the observed gaps in the Anti-Terrorism Act 2002, the Museveni government took measures at its amendment. In May 2017, the Government of Uganda passed the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, which among others seeks to amend the definitions of terrorism and acts of terrorism to include the revised internationally aspects envisaged by the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism; and other related purposes.[42]

In the aftermath of the July 2010 terrorist attack in Kampala, the Government of Uganda quietly passed the Regulation of Interception of Communication Bill 2007 otherwise referred to as the Phone Tapping Bill.[43] This Act was passed and subsequently gazetted as Uganda Gazette

[39] Blackhall Publishing, "Laws of Uganda" https://www.ugandalaws.com/principal-legislation/anti-terrorism-act (accessed 18 March 2022).

[40] Ibid.

[41] Tumushabe, Alex B."The Dilemma of Combating Terrorism in Democratizing States." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015, p. 20.

[42] Republic of Uganda, Anti-Terrorism Amendment Act 2017, https://www.mia.go.ug/sites/default/files/download/THE%20ANTI-TERRORISM%20%28AMMENDMENT%29%20ACT%2C%202017.pdf (accessed 18 March 2022).

[43] John Bosco Mayiga, "Parliament passes law to intercept communications following Uganda attacks" *Africa Centre for Media Excellence*, 23

No. 53, Volume CIII dated 3 September 2010 as Regulation of Interception of Communications Act.[44] This Act permits security agencies to apply for a warrant from a designated Judge to enable them to mount surveillance or intercept any person's electronic communications, meetings, postal packages, mails, fax and private messages suspected to be linked to acts of terrorism. It further authorises the security agencies acting within its provisions to access and search any premises including monitor bank details suspected of links with acts of terrorism.[45] Critics from the Uganda Human Rights Network (HURINET) and the Uganda Law Society (ULS) have argued that the Act violated fundamental freedom enshrined in the country's constitution.[46]

In furtherance of its counterterrorism measures, the Government of Uganda further enacted the Anti-Money Laundering Act in October 2013 which criminalised money laundering and terrorists financing while providing frameworks to prevent, detect and investigate money laundering in the country.[47] This became necessary to augment the Terrorism Act especially as there was no extant legislation that criminalised money laundering in the country. The Act provides for the prohibition and prevention of money laundering, the establishment of a Financial Intelligence Authority Board in order to combat money laundering activities and further provides penalties including seizure, freezing and forfeiting assets linked to terrorists.[48] Drawing from this, the Government of Uganda introduced the Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2015 to address gaps relating to the financing of terrorism in the extant legislation. This bill culminated in the Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Act of May 2017.

Beyond the legislative measures adopted to counterterrorism in Uganda, the Government complemented its counterterrorism initiatives with law enforcement measures. This involved police operations as the

July 2010, https://acme-ug.org/2010/07/23/parliament-passes-law-to-intercept-communications-following-uganda-attacks/ (accessed 18 March 2022).

[44] Uganda Legal Information Institute," Regulation of Interception of Communications Act" https://old.ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2015/18-2 (accessed 18 March 2022).

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Isoke, Op. Cit, p. 36.

[48] TheRepublicofUganda,"AntiMoneyLaunderingAct2013" https://bou.or.ug/bou/bouwebsite/bouwebsitecontent/acts/supervision_acts_regulations/FI_Act/The-Anti-money-Laundering-Act-2013.pdf (accessed 18 March 2022).

Ugandan police was the lead agency in counterterrorism in the country. The national police and its personnel were supported by the intelligence community comprising of the Internal Security Organisation (ISO), External Security Organisation (ESO), Crime Intelligence, and Military Intelligence. The ISO and ESO are civilian intelligence agencies established under the Security Organisation Act of 1987 with mandates to focus on internal and external intelligence respectively.[49] The Crime Intelligence focuses on matters relating to serious crimes for police investigation while the Military Intelligence gather intelligence relating to military policies, plans, and programmes.[50] The intelligence community in Uganda formed the Joint Anti-Terrorism Task unit (JATT) in 1999 to boost counterterrorism collaborations against audacious assaults perpetrated in the country by the ADF and LRA.

The Ugandan police created the Police Anti-Terrorism Unit (PATU) under the Special Branch Department (SBD) until 2007 when the SBD was disbanded and the PATU was placed under a newly established Directorate of Counter Terrorism (DCT). Subsequently, certain specialised anti-terrorism units such as the Very Important Persons Protection Unit, the Aviation Police Unit, Intelligence Police Unit, Tourism Police Unit, Canine Police Unit and Bomb Disposal Unit were created and placed under the DCT.[51] Community policing was adopted as an approach to combat terrorism because the government believed and still believes that communities are an integral part in countering terrorism. Enormous resources have been put into awareness, sensitisation and training of communities in an effort to create new counterterrorism partners. The training for communities put at the centre the importance of human security and emphasising what these communities can do to support the security forces. The advantage of community policing was the feasibility of the use of intelligence to penetrate communities and learning firsthand through mapping of those terror cells or other radicalising centres that are producing and recruiting the terrorists. The community policing has been matched with target hardening in areas that are prone to terrorism for example embassies, shopping malls including our personal machines.

[49] Uganda Legal Information Institute, "SecurityOrganisation Act 1987" https://old.ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/305 (accessed 18 March 2022).

[50] Isoke, Op. Cit. p. 44.

[51] Ibid., p. 39.

As part of its efforts at tracking cross-border movement of terrorists and other transnational criminals, the Uganda Immigration introduced the Personal Identification Secure Comparison System (PISCES) at various major entry points into the country to facilitate data capture from travel document of travellers which include their international movements. The PISCES was deployed at the Entebbe International Airport (EIA), Busia and Malaba on the Kenya-eastern border, Katuna on the Rwanda-southwestern border and Mpondwe at the DRC-western border and significantly facilitated the identification, interception and profiling of terror suspects.[52] In December 2014, the Government introduced the National Identity Card and electronic passport (e-passport) to replace the multiple identifications carried by citizens and to booster the national database for movement.[53]

The Ugandan military has also played an active part in counterterrorism engagements in the country. For instance, the deployment of the military personnel along vulnerable border frontiers has often contributed to holding in check the cross-border activities of the ADF, LRA and Al Shabaab. In recognition of the evolving security dynamics requiring the engagement of the military, the Government of Uganda issued a White Paper on Defence Transformation in 2004 which outlined the country's defence and security priorities as follows:

a. A society that functions according to principles of Justice, Freedom and Democracy, where fundamental Human Rights are promoted and protected.
b. A political environment in which power is exercised by a democratically-elected leadership, and where the military is subordinate to civil authority.
c. A state that empowers the active participation of all Ugandans in the governance process, and works to meet their basic needs such as health, education, shelter, clean water and food.
d. A country that is secure and united, where everybody is free to participate in actions to develop economically.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

e. A nation that has the capacity to defend herself from external threats and to maintain her National Sovereignty, Independence, and Territorial Integrity.
f. A county at peace with her neighbours and supports regional/global efforts to maintain peace and stability, and which fulfils her international obligations.[54]

In April 2005, the Ugandan Parliament enacted an Act for the establishment and regulation of the army known as the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF).[55] In compliance with the provision of Sections 42 to 45 of the Act, the UPDF has since then engaged in kinetic and non-kinetic operations in pursuit of the counterterrorism initiatives of the Government. For instance, in 2014, UPDF personnel were deployed alongside operatives from the police and other security agencies in response to intelligence alerts and warning from the Ugandan police on possible attacks in the capital city of Kampala and the Entebbe International Airport.[56] Personnel of the UPDF were temporarily deployed to strengthen security in Kampala and around the airport at Entebbe.[57] The Uganda military has also contributed to the training of various security agencies for counterterrorism operations. It is however important to note that the role of the UPDF in counterterrorism operations has been enhanced by the support from strategic partners like the United States which provided it with requisite training opportunities, support for overt operations and the procurement of military assets needed for effective counterterrorism operations.

[54] Republic of Uganda, "White Paper on Defence Transformation, June 2004, p.15; https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/155172/uganda2004.pdf (accessed 18 March 2022).

[55] Uganda Legal Information Institute, "Ugandan Peoples Defence Forces Act 2005" https://ulii.org/akn/ug/act/statute/1992/3/eng%402000-12-31 (accessed 18 March 2022).

[56] United States Embassy in Uganda, "Possible attack at Entebbe International Airport" 3 July 2014, https://ug.usembassy.gov/possible-attack-at-entebbe-international-airport/ (accessed 18 March 2022).

[57] British Broadcasting Corporation News, "Uganda alert after airport terror warning" 4 July 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28144472 (accessed 19 March 2022).

Uganda and International Counterterrorism Cooperation

In addition to the legal and law enforcement measures, the Government of Uganda engages in diplomatic channels through bilateral, multilateral, and regional cooperation. By 2002, the Government of Uganda ratified all international conventions on terrorism. The commitment of the Museveni-led administration to accepting the international conventions could be linked to the threats posed by the ADF and LRA to Uganda bearing in mind the cross-border nature of their operations.[58] Consequently, the Government of Uganda has at intervals activated its diplomatic arrangements in its counterterrorism efforts.

Leveraging on regional cooperation in the Great Lakes, the defence forces of Uganda, DRC, and quasi-independent South Sudan launched the Operation Lightning Thunder in December 2008 as joint military offensives against the LRA bases in northeastern Congo especially the Garamba National Park. This compelled Kony and his fighters to retreat deeper into the DRC and the Central African Republic forest areas.[59] The United States provided 100 Special Forces personnel as military advisors to facilitate this operation at the estimated cost of USD 38 million.[60] However, the inability of the combined forces to capture or annihilate Joseph Kony and his fighters sparked off disastrous consequences as the LRA retaliated with new massacres of about 900 civilians in Congo and nearby South Sudan border areas.[61]

The UPDF is also engaged in AMISOM operations in Somalia alongside Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. As at 2010, Uganda also deployed over 5,000 forces to Somalia as part of the AMISOM operations against the Al Shabaab. The UPDF were simultaneously engaged

[58] Peter Kagwanja, "Counter-Terrorism in the Horn of Africa: New Security Frontiers, Old Strategies,"*African Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2006, p.78.

[59] Andrea Prah, "Regional security cooperation in Africa: An evaluation of the regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army" *African Journal for Conflict Resolution*, Volume 2, 2019, https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/regional-security-cooperation-in-africa/ (accessed 19 March 2022).

[60] Ibid.

[61] United States 111th Congress Public Law 172, "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009 "United States Government Printing Office" https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-111publ172/html/PLAW-111publ172.htm (accessed 19 March 2022).

in similar operations against the LRA bases in Central Africa Republic (CAR) until they were compelled by the CAR Government to retreat to its bases in Djemaa and Sam Ouandja in the south near the border with Congo.[62] Speculations exist that Uganda's cross-border military operations against terrorist groups in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa has overstretched the UPDF logistics supply lines with adverse effects on the morale of Ugandan troops.

Beyond the national frontiers, Uganda is an active member of the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and plays an active part in the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. With regard to Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), Uganda is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESMALAG) which is a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body.[63]

Conclusion

Like other countries in East Africa and the Great Lakes regions, terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Uganda are imminent. The three main terrorist groups threatening the country, namely, the ADF, Al Shabaab, and LRA usually operate from under-governed spaces in neighbouring countries. Although these groups perpetrated terrorist acts mostly on the population around the border areas, they have established cells in major cities and towns like Kampala and Jinja including Luwero district from where they launch terrorist attacks on Uganda.

In view of evolving threats of terrorism in Uganda, the Museveni administration has introduced legal and policy frameworks targeted at effectively countering the activities of terrorist organisation and individuals in the country. Uganda enacted and amended its Anti-Terrorism in 2002 and 2017, respectively. It also enacted the Regulation of Interception of Communication Act in 2010 and the Anti Money Laundering

[62] Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment "Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)" November 2010, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/BD3CA493042ADC29C12577F80042FAA3-Full_Report.pdf (accessed 19 March 2022).

[63] United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Uganda" 19 September 2018, https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f7513.html (accessed 19 March 2022).

Act in 2013 besides the establishment of the International Criminal Division to try relevant cases. The Government of Uganda has also embarked on institution building as well as the provision of requisite jobs for the teeming youth population. These legislative instruments and upgrades are therefore strongly considered to have significantly enhanced Uganda's counterterrorism engagements.

Furthermore, Uganda supports regional cooperation with neighbours to contain the transnational threats posed by terrorism in East Africa. To this effect, Uganda supports counterterrorism operations in terms of intelligence sharing, logistic support and close border surveillance and control such that it became the highest troop-contributing country to the AMISOM operations in Somalia. It is important to note that Uganda's geographical location in East Africa and the Great Lakes is key to understanding the country's commitments to regional counterterrorism cooperation. Since Uganda is a landlocked country to neighbours threatened by terrorism, and to who it is dependent for most of its export and import trade, it considered regional action against terrorism very important. This commitment is further strengthened by the growing vulnerability of neighbouring DRC to acts of terrorism perpetrated by the Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP). These dynamics alongside the realities of cross-border and domestic incidents of terrorism have greatly shaped Uganda's prevailing concern over terrorist threats to regional security in East Africa.

Beyond the commitments of the Museveni administration to counterterrorism efforts, critics often accuse the government of human rights violations. Drawing from the above, it is imperative that the Government of Uganda should as a matter of top priority enhance its human rights records bearing in mind that human rights violations constitute another key grievance that provokes the resort to terrorism. This fact is recognised as one of the key pillars of the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy. Furthermore, in view of the cross-border dynamics associated with terrorism in Uganda, it is important that the Government of Uganda should continue its efforts at promoting regional cooperation in counterterrorism operations as this is vital to foster security and integration in East Africa and the Great Lakes.

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PART III

North Africa

CHAPTER 12

Anatomy of Terrorism in North Africa and the Maghreb

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Ibifubara Abbiyesuku

Introduction

The seven countries identified by the African Union to comprise North Africa are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), and Tunisia.[1] The region is bordered in the west by the North Atlantic Ocean, in the north by the Mediterranean Sea and east by the Red Sea and Middle East. The Sahelo-Saharan belt lies south of North Africa, and the three main areas of interest in the region are the Maghreb of the northwest, the Nile River valley in the east, and

[1] West Africa and Sahel Club Secretariat, (2017) "Six Regions of Africa" West Africa Brief, www.west-africa-brief.org/content/en/six-regions-african-union (accessed 30 October 2022).

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@gmail.com

I. Abbiyesuku
Department of History, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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the African Transition Zone where the Sahara Desert merges with the sub-Saharan and equatorial belt.[2] On the other hand, the Maghreb which in Arab means "Isle of the West" comprises the countries from Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia which fall within the range of the Atlas Mountain. The region shares the Mediterranean climate with southern Europe.

In 2020, the population of North Africa was estimated at 246,232,518 persons comprising 3.3% of world population with a total of 129,068,218 North Africans which approximates 52.4% as urban dwellers.[3] This population inhabits the North Africa region, which has a total land mass of 7,769,438 km^2 (2,999,796 square miles).[4] The region was originally inhabited by Berbers, Tuaregs, and some indigenous Black population. However, following the Muslim-Arab conquest of the region in the seventh century and accompanying Arabisation and Islamisation of the Berber, Tuareg and other indigenous population in the region, the predominant ethno-racial group in North Africa became the Arab Muslims. There exist Orthodox Christians, which constitute a small portion of the population as European influence also penetrated the region through the influence of the old Roman empire prior to its collapse, Spanish influence around the Strait of Gibraltar and the colonial enterprises of Britain, France and Italy. It was, however, the exposure to the Middle East that continues to hold more cultural influence on the countries in North Africa and this influence has contributed immensely to the spread of terrorism in the region.

Overview of Terrorism in North Africa and the Maghreb

Generally, terrorism has emerged as a recurring security issue in the North Africa region. About 300 terrorist incidents occurred in North Africa between 1968 and 2004, of which Algeria and Egypt experienced 47.9%

[2] University of Minnesota, (n.d.) "North Africa and the African Transition Zone" https://open.lib.umn.edu/worldgeography/chapter/8-3-north-africa-and-the-african-transition-zone/ (accessed 30 October 2022).

[3] Worldometer, "North Africa Population". https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/northern-africa-population/ (accessed 30 October 2022).

[4] Ibid.

and 35.5% of the incidents respectively.[5] The region attracted the highest incidents of terrorism in Africa in the last decade of the twentieth century following the return of fighters that fought alongside the Mujahedin in Afghanistan.

In terms of global trends, North Africa alongside the Middle East accounted for 31.1% of terrorist incidents with a corresponding 49.3% of terrorist-induced casualties between 2002 and 2018.[6] In the Maghreb, terrorist activities increased after the September 11th attacks in New York, with Algeria recording most of the attacks from 20 in 2001 to 185 in 2009. Additionally, the Maghreb countries of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have continued to experience the mushrooming of terrorist cells.[7]

The major terrorist organisations that have been identified in North Africa include the Muslim Brotherhood or Al Qaeda core which has strong root in Egypt, and Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis which later became the Islamic State in the Sinai in August 2014 when it pledged allegiance to the Daesh as the Islamic State - Sinai Province (ISIS-SP). Others are the Ansar Al Sharia in Tunisia and Libya and the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The AQIM executed over 600 terrorist attacks in Algeria.[8] Others are the Jund Al-Khalifa Brigade in Algeria which later became the Wilayat al-Jazair after ISIS accepted its allegiance in November 2014. These groups have continued to perpetrate terrorist acts in the region such as radicalisation and recruitment of vulnerable population, bombing, kidnapping for ransom, hostage taking, torture, murder, assassinations, arson, acts of sabotage, smuggling, hijacking, and violent robberies, among others.

[5] Abdallah Shehata Khattab, "Economic Consequences of Terrorism in North Africa: Insights from Economic Theory" in Wafula Okumu and Anneli Botha (eds.) *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps*" (Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2008).

[6] Wukki Kim and Todd Sandler, (2020) "Middle East and North Africa: Terrorism and Conflicts" *Global Policy,* Volume 11, Issue 4, September, https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/articles/conflict-and-security/middle-east-and-north-africa-terrorism-and-conflicts (accessed 31 October 2022).

[7] Anouar Boukhars, "Political Violence in North Africa: The Perils of Incomplete Liberalisation" "*Brookings Doha Centre Analysis Paper*" Number 3, January 2011, p. 11.

[8] Counter Extremism Project, "Algeria: Extremism and Terrorism" https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/algeria-extremism-and-terrorism/report (accessed 31 October 2022).

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood was for decades considered as a major terrorist group by the Government as it engaged in intense and armed contest for power. Former President Hosni Mubarak (1980–2011), embarked on the crackdown of Islamists who were considered a political threat following the assassination of his predecessor, Anwar Sadat in 1980. This led to the arrest and administrative detention of several thousand without charge under a State of Emergency law that was instituted in 1967.[9] The Muslim Brotherhood and other local pseudo-Salafi groups such as the al-Gamaa al-Islamiya (The Islamic Group) and Talaeh al-Fatah (Vanguard of the Conquest) in Egypt drew inspiration from the success of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. These groups further hoped that they could replicate a similar revolution in Egypt to replace the non-theocratic and un-Islamic regime of Hosni Mubarak which replaced Anwar Sadat in 1981. It was these groups that masterminded the terrorist attacks in Egypt during the 1990s. For instance, the al-Gamal al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Group) attacked tourists at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Luxor killing 68 persons on 17 November 1997.

The nature of terrorist attacks in North Africa includes threats and physical violence. In 1993, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria commenced the assassination of journalists arguing that "those who fight by the pen shall die by the sword" thereby forcing the domestic and international media into hiding.[10] The GIA bombed the international airport in Algiers in August 1992 and by August 1993, the group issued a 1-month ultimatum to foreigners to leave the country following which it commenced the assassination of foreigners especially French nationals. In December 1993, the GIA killed 23 foreigners and by May 1996, it had killed 116 foreigners of which 39 were French nationals.[11]

Terrorist groups in North Africa and the Maghreb have also in the course of their operations, infiltrated the defence and security services of countries in North Africa by planting their members as informants and fifth columnists. In Algeria, former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika had to purge the armed forces and security agencies of personnel suspected of collaborating with the terrorist groups in the country.

[9] Thomas Renard, "Returnees in the Maghreb: Comparing Policies on Returnng Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia" *Egmont Papers*, Conrad Adenauer Stiftung, April, 2019.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

Attempts at explaining the persistence of terrorism in North Africa identify some underlying factors problems of governance, political repression, socio-economic exploitation, deprivation, and discrimination directed towards specific groups disguised in ethnic, racial, and class lines.[12] Anneli Botha established a nexus between the counterterrorism strategies in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia with the spread of transnational terrorism in Europe. She notes that political exclusion, mass arrests, and conviction forced several persons linked to political opposition or acts of violence to flee into exile and seek political asylum abroad from where they often sponsored terrorist acts against their countries of origin.[13] Yet, Libya under Ghadaffi was accused of harbouring terrorists elements especially Abdelbaset Ali Mohmen al-Megrahi and Lamin Khalifa Fhimah accused of complicity in the bombing of the Pan American Airline (Pan Am 103) over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988.[14]

Furthermore, the vast land in all the North African countries that remain largely unoccupied for a long time proved useful as training grounds to terrorist groups operating in North Africa and the Maghreb. These lands also facilitate irregular migration especially of persons crossing from sub-Saharan Africa through the Mediterranean to Europe of which some have criminal records in their countries of origin.

On the continental scale, terrorist attacks were predominant in North Africa and the Maghreb during the 1990s as the respective governments in the region contended against the rising political influence of Muslim fundamentalist groups. One noticeable trend during this period was the involvement of North African nationals that interfaced with other extremists from the Middle East, many of whom fought alongside the Mujahideen in Afghanistan. The era was therefore characterised by the activities of transnational pseudo Salafi-jihadi groups whose proselytisation activities often transcend state boundaries. The weapons at the disposal of terrorist groups were largely acquired from Asia and eastern Europe, especially from former socialist republics in the defunct Soviet Union and Afghanistan.

[12] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Interrogating the Scourge of Terrorism in North Africa" *Africa Political Science Review*, Volume 2, Number 1, 2010, p. 101.

[13] Anneli Botha. "Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalisation of Domestic Terrorism." *Institute for Security Studies Monographs* 2008.144 (2008), p. 125.

[14] Britannica, "Pan Am Flight 103" https://www.britannica.com/event/Pan-Am-flight-103 (accessed 31 October 2022).

The growing interactions and interdependence of the international system have further contributed to terrorism in North Africa. For instance, fighters from North Africa have since the dawn of the twenty-first century continued to move between the Maghreb, Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). For instance, between August 2006 and August 2007, North Africa accounted for 191 out of 595 fighters in Iraq which approximates to 32%, and Libya contributed the highest number estimated at 18.8% of the total.[15] Similar movements have also been made to Afghanistan and the Sahel.

The respective national Governments in North Africa leveraged on repressive state institutions to curtail political and ideological dissent that fed terrorism and political violence. The strategy of political repression did not however lead to the cessation of terrorism in the region thereby raising critical concerns on the effectiveness of the counterterrorism mechanisms in place. The country-specific review of the dynamics of terrorism in North Africa and the Maghreb since the last decade of the twentieth century sheds further light on the terrorist challenge in the region.

Algeria

The end of the Russian occupation of Afghanistan in the mid-1980s had implications for terrorism in North Africa and the Maghreb. First, the withdrawal of Russian troops was characterised by the end of the conflict with the Mujahedin and accompanying return Islamist fighters of North African origin who had gone to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Mujahedin back to their respective countries. These returnee fighters mounted new demands for political change in their home countries on return and intensified agitations for the introduction and implementation of stricter Islamic laws at national levels.

In Algeria, the period between 1990 and 2000 brought to the fore the nexus between terrorism and political repression arising from dashed hopes of electoral victory. As a response to the series of riots and demonstrations experienced in 1988, President Chadli Bandjedid opened up the country's political space with the introduction of a multi-party system in the constitution. This innovation provided opportunity for organised

[15] "Political Violence in North Africa: The Perils of Incomplete Liberalisation" "*Brookings Doha Centre Analysis Paper*" Number 3, January 2011, p. 11.

Islamist groups, especially the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) to deploy their established assets as the main opposition group in the country. The FIS and its armed wing, the Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS), were initially the primary vehicles of opposition to the military-controlled government with the return of Algerian nationals who had fought in the Mujahideen-Soviet conflict in Afghanistan, more radical splinter groups emerged later in the 1990s. These set of Algerian returnees referred to locally as *les afghanis* because they wore Afghan-style clothing, had beards and turbans and became known as *les afghans* are believed to have been instrumental to the spread of terrorism upon return in the country.[16]

To prevent an overwhelming FIS victory in the second round of elections in January 1992, cliques of military officers forced Bendjedid to resign and give up power. The elections were cancelled, and the state responded with a commensurate coercive response to the Islamists, as the military launched a crackdown against the FIS. The prevailing grievances of the Islamists were heightened with the perceived tacit support of the Algerian Government towards the United States led coalition forces against Iraq (an Arab country) during the Gulf War. The Islamists in Algeria therefore intensified their criticisms against the government and demanded political change through elections.

The government of Algeria however intensified political repression and this heightened grievances, growing mistrust and the radicalisation of ISF members. It was this situation that culminated in the formation of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in 1993. The GIA labelled the military regime and its supporters as apostates. Consequently, it launched and sustained intensive terror assaults on the Algerian state and even extended its grievances beyond the government to include any Algerian, secular or Islamist who raised questions on their resort to terrorist acts in the pursuit of their political objectives.[17]

In 1996, Antar Zouabri, the new Emir of the GIA issued a fatwa legitimising the killing of anyone that failed to support their organisation.[18] It was a breakaway faction of the GIA under the leadership of Hassan Hatab that transformed to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)

[16] Botha, Anneli. "Terrorism in the Maghreb: The transnationalisation of domestic terrorism." *Institute for Security Studies Monographs* 2008.144 (2008), p.32.

[17] Anouar Boukhars, "Political Violence in North Africa: The Perils of Incomplete Liberalisation" in *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper*, Number 3, January 2011, p. 19.

[18] Ibid.

which had alliance with the extremist groups in Morocco. The GSPC established its Sahara Katiba (camp) at the Tibesti mountain to facilitate the recruitment of new members from Chad, Sudan, Libya, Mauritania, Mali, and the larger sub-Saharan Africa and had a training ground along the Libya-Chad borders.[19]

A splinter group of the GSPC under Nabil Sahraoni (Sheikh Abou Ibrahim Mustapha) emerged in September 2003 and led the integration of the group into the Al Qaeda Network in September 2006 to become the Al Qaeda in the land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in January 2007.[20] The AQIM had the authority to federate all pseudo-Salafi groups in the Maghreb and also grant franchise to cells in the Maghreb and beyond.[21] The Algerian experience of terrorism brought to the fore the nexus between terrorism and political repression. However, as part of the official response to terrorism in Algeria, the Abdoulaye Bouteflika administration granted amnesty to members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).

Arab Spring and Terrorism in North Africa

The Arab Spring in the MENA brought far-reaching changes to the politics and security of states in North Africa and the Maghreb. In addition to the calls for dismantling of dictatorial regimes and more democratic rights in the region, the Arab Spring unveiled mass activism and growing discontent for sit-tight leaders in the region and culminated in the sudden resignation of President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and Muammar Ghadaffi in Libya. However, the sudden overthrow of these regimes, especially the forceful overthrow of Ghadaffi in Libya and the emergence of military coups in Egypt, threw up new security challenges that were exploited by terrorist groups to launch audacious attacks in the region.

In their efforts to maximise the uncertainties and accompanying security gaps, the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) reactivated its terrorist cells to launch audacious attacks in the region. Two prominent

[19] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Question of Security in West Africa" Africa Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, June 2010, p. 69.

[20] Ibid. p. 64.

[21] Ibid. p. 66.

terrorist acts perpetrated by them include the 11 September 2012 attack on the United States diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya which resulted in the death of the United States Ambassador to Libya, Charles Stevens, among 3 others, as well as the January 2013 attack on the Tigantourine Gas facility near Amenas in Southern Algeria.[22]

In September 2014, former GIA combatant who later became the commander of Jund Al-Khalifa Brigade, Abdelmalek Gouri also known as Khaled Abu Suleiman, severed links with the AQIM to pledge allegiance to the ISIS under Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's leadership. The ISIS leader accepted the Jund Al-Khalifa Brigade in November 2014 referring to it as Wilayat al-Jazair.[23] Subsequently, 170 ISIS elements in Algeria went to Syria as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) in support of ISIS. Similarly, another group of (FTFs) from Tunisia estimated at about 6,000 to 7,000, joined the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Egypt

In Egypt, the Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis (ABM) emerged in the Sinai region of Egypt in 2011 in pursuit of the establishment of an Islamic State and the implementation of Sharia in the Sinai Peninsula and the Nile Valley.[24] As part of its objectives, the ABM also seeks the destruction of the State of Israel and has repeatedly launched cross-border attacks targeting pipelines supplying gas to Israel and Jordan as well as Israel's Southern territories.[25]

Egypt's experience of the Arab Spring has since 2011 been characterised by change of political leadership through military intervention into politics, a flawed attempt at democratisation and another decline to military coup. Specifically, while former Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak was compelled to resign from power after 11 January 2011 following 18 days of mass protests, the vestiges of the regime remained largely intact. This could be deciphered from the media announcement by then Egyptian

[22] United States Congress, "Terrorist Attack in Benghazi: The Secretary of States View" Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representative, Serial No,113-11, One hundred and Thirteenth Congress, First Session, 23 January 2013.

[23] Counter Extremism Project, "Algeria: Extremism and Terrorism" Op. Cit., p. 4.

[24] United States of America, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Counterterrorism Centre, "Ansar Bayt al Maqdis" https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/ansar_bayt_al_maqdis.html (accessed 31 October 2022).

[25] Ibid.

Vice President, Omar Suleiman that "…in the difficult circumstances our country is facing, President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak has decided to give up the office of the president of the republic".[26] This announcement was received with tumultuous cheers from protestors across the country who had been demonstrating and demanding for the end of Mubarak's 30-years rule since 25 January 2011.

Egypt's experience of democracy under President Mohammed Morsi was truncated on 3 July 2013 following a military coup barely one year after his ascension to power. The Morsi administration was widely criticised for rejecting inclusion of divergent legitimate interests in his government while concentrating power in the hands of his Muslim Brotherhood supporters. He was further accused of economic mismanagement and dwindling human rights and social justice.[27] Public suspicion and apprehension towards the Morsi administration deepened as the constituent assembly drafting the new constitution was dominated by Islamists. In addition, Morsi issued a decree authorising the armed forces to protect national institutions and polling places, a measure considered as a manifestation and reliance on martial law. The deepened grievances culminated in violent protests in which 50 persons were killed outside the Ittihadiya presidential palace in Cairo.[28] It was this trajectory that led to the overthrow, arrest, and prosecution of Morsi and 14 senior officials of his administration by the new military regime of General Adbul Fattah Al-Sisi.

The Muslim Brotherhood responded to the military coup with violent protests which claimed an estimated 1,000 lives while demanding for the release and reinstatement of Morsi's presidency. On its part, the Al-Sisi regime declared the Muslim Brotherhood party and affiliated pseudo-Islamist groups as terrorist organisations and thereafter intensified counterterrorism onslaughts against the group. The Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis unleashed terrorist attacks on Egypt which included the

[26] Noor El-Terk, (2011), "It was a dream: Remembering the fall of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak" *Al Jazeera*, 11th February, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/2/11/this-is-our-country-remembering-the-day-hosni-mubarak-resigned (accessed 9 October 2022).

[27] BBC News, (2019), "Egypt's Mohammed Morsi: A Turbulent Presidency cut short" 19 June, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-18371427 (accessed 10 October 2022).

[28] Ibid.

attempted assassination of Egypt's Interior Minister, Mohammed Ibrahim in September 2013.[29] In January 2014, the group claimed responsibility for the downing of a military helicopter in the Sinai with a Surface-to-Air-Missile (SAM) in January 2014.[30] The ABM also carried out the suicide bombing of a bus conveying tourists in Taba town of Egypt's Sinai peninsula near the border with Israel which killed two Koreans and an Egyptian in February 2014.[31] The group also claimed responsibility for a mortar attack on the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) based in the Sinai in June 2015. Egypt's experience of terrorism clearly demonstrates the nexus between militant Islamism, political repression, military coups and the struggle for liberalism in the post-Arab Spring era.

Libya

In Libya, the violent overthrow of the Ghadaffi regime in October 2011 launched the country into a cycle of conflict between the Government of National Accord (GNA) and armed groups under the umbrella of the Libyan National Army (LNA). The glaring absence of firm central authority in the country has been exploited by terrorist organisations in Africa and beyond especially the Daesh or Islamic State in Libya (IS-Libya) which established smaller cells in urban centres and the desert districts of Jufra, Murzuq and Sebha following their expulsion from Sirte in 2016.[32] The territories of southern Libya have remained vulnerable to elements of Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and IS-Libya, which operated with relative ease attacking LNA and GNA assets in the country. With the huge volume of under-controlled and under-regulated national armoury across

[29] Sharaf al-Hourani and Abigail Hauslohner, "Egypt's Interior Minister Survives Blast; 22 People Reported Injured" *The Washington Post*, 5 September 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypts-interior-minister-survives-blast-at-least-7-injured/2013/09/05/52140dfc-1617-11e3-804b-d3a1a3a18f2c_story.html.

[30] David D Kirkpatrick, "Militants Down Egyptian Helicopter, killing Five" *New York Times*, 26 January 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/27/world/middleeast/militants-down-egyptian-helicopter-killing-5-soldiers.html (accessed 26 November 2022).

[31] Shadia Nasralla and Michael Georgy, "Egyptian Militants Warn Tourists to Leave or Face Attacks" *Reuters,* 18 February 2014.

[32] United States Department of States Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Libya" https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/libya/ (accessed 7 November 2022).

the country, Libya became a source of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) to terrorist organisations in the Sahel and MENA.

Despite the absence of firm central authority in Tripoli, Libya remains a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. In line with this, the GNA and LNA embarked on counterterrorism operations within their areas of control. In September 2019, the United States and the GNA conducted four precision airstrikes against IS-Libya in the southern frontiers which resulted in the elimination of 43 fighters while several others were injured. The GNA further arrested and detained over 31 suspected terrorists affiliated with the IS-Libya and the AQIM. One of those arrested for terrorism-related offences of collaboration with IS-Libya on 29 November 2019 was Emad Faraj Mansour al-Shuqabi.

The LNA, meanwhile, conducted over 25 raids in which it killed 44 and arrested 57 suspected terrorists.[33] In one of the raids on 13 December 2019, the LNA arrested two men suspected of collaboration with Egyptian nationals to smuggle funds in support of the operations of the IS-Libya.[34] These arrests led to the recovery and confiscation of firearms and ammunition recovered from the suspects in Benghazi. Below is a table summarising major terrorist attacks in Libya.

Libya's northwest neighbour, Tunisia, has experienced two major terrorist incidents alongside numerous other terrorist-related attacks since the Jasmine Revolution or Arab Spring in Tunisia. The Bardo attack on March 20th 2015 and Port El Kantaoui attack of the same year resulted in the killing of 22 persons and 38 tourists, respectively.[35] Both incidents were accompanied by a suicide attack on a police bus on 24 November 2015. In October 2018, a radicalised young lady executed a suicide attack at Bourguiba Avenue in central Tunis thereby heightening tensions on the country's continued vulnerability to terrorism. In response to these incidents, the Government of Tunisia among other measures retained the nationwide State of Emergency it imposed in November 2015.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Republic of France, "LCCT II - Support Project to Combat Terrorism in Tunisia" Ministry of Interior CiviPol: Missions and Projects, https://www.civipol.fr/en/projects/lcct-ii-support-project-combat-terrorism-tunisia (accessed 6 November 2022).

Tunisia

Tunisia's vulnerability to terrorism is enhanced by its proximity and shared porous borders to Libya, which has since the violent collapse of the Ghadaffi regime been trapped in armed conflict that sustains a security vacuum that is exploited by terrorist groups in North Africa and the Maghreb. Tunisia also shared borders with Algeria, which also has a long history of terrorism. Terrorists in Tunisia have identified and targeted crowded areas, government installations, transportation networks including the aviation sector, businesses with western interests and areas where foreign nationals and tourists are known to gather as places of higher risk of terrorist attacks in Tunisia.[36] The targets of terrorists in Tunisia have been varied, and have included persons of occupations especially journalists, humanitarian aid workers, persons engaged in the tourism industry as well as government officials especially defence and security personnel. Tunisia is also vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage incidents linked to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Daesh-affiliated groups which have targeted security forces in the Chaambi Mountains around the border areas with Libya.

Some major terrorist incidents in Tunisia within the last decade include:

a. The knife attack on two security officers near a synagogue in central Tunis on 24 June 2022.
b. Another knife attack injuring three passengers on a tram at the Bab Alioua station in Tunis on 29 January 2022.
c. Attack on police personnel at the Ministry of Interior on Habib Bourgiba avenue in central Tunis by assailants using knife and axe on 26 November 2021.
d. Terror attack on two personnel of Tunisia National Guard at Sousse by three assailants on 6 September 2020.
e. Terror attack on a French national and a Tunisian soldier at Zarzouna in northern Tunisia on 14 October 2019.

[36] Government of United Kingdom (n.d.), "Foreign Travel Advice: Tunisia". http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/tunisia/terrorism (accessed 6 November 2022).

f. Two suicide bombing targeted at security personnel in central Tunis on 27 June 2019 which resulted to the death of three persons including the suicide bombers.
g. Bombing incident on Habib Bourguiba Avenue in central Tunis in which 15 security personnel and five civilians were injured on 29 October 2018.
h. Attack on security forces near Ghardimaou near the border with Algeria in which some personnel of Tunisia National Guard were killed on 8 July 2018 after Tunisia defence and security forces earlier disrupted a terrorist group in Hammamet.
i. Terrorist attack leading to the death of 38 foreign tourists including 30 Britons at Port El Kantaoui near Sousse on 26 June 2015.
j. Terrorist attack at the Bardo Museum in central Tunis in which 21 tourists including a Briton were killed on 18 March 2015.[37]

Tunisia experienced another terrorist attack at the Island port town of Aghir Djerba on 9 May 2023 when a Tunisian National Naval Guard officer identified as Wissam Khazri attacked the El Ghriba Synagogue leading to the death of the attacker, three security personnel and two civilian tourists identified as Aviel Hadad and Benjamin Hadad.[38] This terror attack coincided with the annual Jewish pilgrimage celebrated by its faithful at the El Ghriba Synagogue. There exist speculations that this attack was a revenge for the attacks on Muslim faithful at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem by Israeli security forces during the month of Ramadan in response to Al Qaeda and Islamic State directive targeted at demonstrating the importance of the Al-Aqsa mosque to the Muslim world.

Prior to this incident, the El Ghriba synagogue was earlier attacked by a suicide bomber on 11 April 2002 leading to the death of 21 persons which included some German and French tourists and about 30 other persons were injured.[39] The Katiba Uqba ibn-Nafi (KUIN), which existed as the Al Qaeda cell in Tunisia, claimed responsibility for the 2002 attack.

[37] Ibid.

[38] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Algiers, "Tunisia: Attack on El Ghriba Synagogue ills Six on the Island of Dherba: Preliminary Analysis" 13 May 2023; ACSRT/PRE-REP/03/2023.

[39] Ibid.

Besides the KUIN, Tunisia is exposed to terrorist threats from Iraq, Libya, Syria and the Islamic State.

Morocco

While Morocco is ranked among the safest countries in the world with respect to terrorism analysis, it still has a history of terrorism like other countries of North Africa and the Maghreb. For instance, on 16 May 2003, members of the Al-Salafiya al-Jihadiya aligned with the AQIM to attack five targets in coordinated strikes which led to the death of 41 victims while another 100 were injured. The victims included several Moroccan nationals, six Europeans, including two Spaniards, two Italians and two French, while four Britons staying at the Hotel Safir, which was also attacked, escaped unhurt.[40] Other facilities targeted were Casa de Espana club, a Jewish community centre, and an old Jewish cemetery including the luxury Farah Hotel frequented by Israelis as well as the Belgian consulate that was damaged following an attack at a Jewish-owned Italian restaurant.[41] Subsequently, Morocco experienced other terrorist attacks at Casablanca in 2007 and 2015, Marrakesh in 2011 and at Imlil in 2018.

The Kingdom of Morocco responded to the new and emerging threats of terrorism in the country by intensifying counterterrorism measures at national level while also engaging international partnerships accordingly. It was the recognition of the dangers posed by these attacks that the Government of Morocco introduced legislative reforms that strengthened the country's counterterrorism framework while adhering to the respect for humans and the rule of law.[42] Other counterterrorism measures adopted by Morocco preventing terrorists from passage through her territories through improved border management procedures, equipment and training of various law enforcement and security personnel. Morocco

[40] Martin Bright, Paul Harris and Ali Bouzerda, "Horror in Casablanca as Al Qaeda toll hits 41" *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/may/18/alqaida.terrorism2 (accessed 26 November 2022).

[41] Ibid.

[42] Aya Benazizi, "Global Terrorism Index 2022: Morocco among the World's Safest Countries" Morocco *World News*, 29 March 2022, https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2022/03/347978/global-terrorism-index-2022-morocco-among-the-worlds-safest-countries (accessed 7 November 2022).

also adopted the tri-dimensional counterterrorism strategy targeted at addressing the challenge of terrorism through security, socio-economic development strategies, and religious assistance.

Morocco also sought collaborations at the international scene to strengthen her counterterrorism response mechanisms. For instance, the Kingdom of Morocco is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) established in September 2011 at the sidelines of the United Nations Summit alongside Nigeria, the United States and 27 other countries. Morocco joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS while also chairing the GCTF's Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group.

In 2020, the Kingdom of Morocco entered into a host-nation agreement with the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT) to provide a Programme Office for Counterterrorism Training in Africa. In furtherance of this agreement, the UNOCT established an office in Rabat to serve as the training hub for counterterrorism, law enforcement, border security management, and the safeguarding human rights in the battle against terrorism in Africa. Morocco plays active roles in the sharing of counterterrorism intelligence and this has contributed to either the arrest and/or preventing terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Italy, Spain, and Sri Lanka.

The effects of these counterterrorism measures can be observed after the May 2003 terrorist attacks in Casablanca, where Morocco intercepted 60 terrorist cells, which include the Belliraj Cell in Casablanca and Nador.[43] It further dismantled about 200 terrorist networks which resulted in more than 3,500 terrorism-related arrests and prevented over 300 planned terrorist attacks in the country with a concomitant reduction in the spate of political dissent.[44] It is the commitment to these sustained counterterrorism engagements that improved Morocco's improved ranking in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) having earned the overall score of 1.156. Morocco therefore earned a global rank of 76th among countries impacted by the threat of terrorism in the 2022 baseline report released by the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP), launched

[43] Boukhars, Op. Cit.

[44] Benazizi, Op. Cit.

on 3 March 2022.[45] The baseline report assesses the indirect consequence of terrorism such as the lives lost, injuries, damage to property as well as the psychological after-effects of terrorist attacks.

However, the continued vulnerability of Morocco to terrorism is deepened by series of arrests that attest to the presence of Islamic State cells within its jurisdiction. Aaron Y Zelin, the Gloria and Ken Levy Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy outlined some of the profound arrests in Morocco to include:

- Dislodging cells in Chtouka Ait Baha and Almeria that facilitated the recruitment and travel of fighters to Islamic State's Wilayat in the Sahel during a joint counterterrorism operation by Spanish and Moroccan officials in January 2023.
- Dislodgement of Islamic State cells in March 2023 located at Souk el Arbaa, Tetouan and Larache by Moroccan authorities and arrest of suspects who sought to train in Islamic State camps in Mali.
- Dislodgement of Islamic State cells located in Tangier, Tetouan, and Inezqane in October 2023 by Moroccan authorities who also discovered a manuscript on methods to join the Islamic State in Wilayat Sahel.
- Dislodgement of Islamic State's recruitment and facilitation cells at Tangier, Casablanca, Beni Mellal and Inezqane in January 2024 that were sending fighters to Wilayat Sahel.
- Arrest of a local in the city of Sale by Moroccan authorities in February 2024 for contacting Islamic State's operatives to facilitate his travel to Wilayat Sahel.
- Arrest of four Moroccans among some members of the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) at Cal Miskaat mountainous areas of autonomous Puntland in November 2023.
- Arrest of two senior ISS members in February 2024 comprising of one Moroccan national and one Syrian at Ufeyn.[46]

[45] Institute of Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2022: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism" launched on 3 March 2022; https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GTI-2022-web-09062022.pdf (accessed 26 November 2022).

[46] Aaron Y Zelin, "The Islamic State on the March in Africa" *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Brief Analysis*, 1 March 2024, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/islamic-state-march-africa (accessed 12 January 2025).

The deduction from above clearly demonstrates that in addition to perpetrating terrorist activities within North Africa and the Maghreb, Islamic State Wilayat in Morocco actively supports terrorist activities in the Sahel with personnel, training and basic logistics.

Morocco's sterling counterterrorism credentials remain outstanding and by ranking of the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) in 2022, it emerged the second terrorism least affected country among the neighbours in the Maghreb after Mauritania which earned a score of 0.509 and ranked 84th country on the global scale.[47] In the wider Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Morocco is the sixth least affected by terrorism after the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and Sudan.[48] Other countries of North Africa and the Maghreb such as Algeria, Tunisia and Libya were ranked 39th, 38th, and 26th, respectively, on the global scale with earned points of 4.432, 4.447 and 5.100, respectively.[49]

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis clearly shows that North Africa regions have for decades proved a theatre of terrorist aggression linked to extremist and anti-imperialist orientations. Against this backdrop and equipped with robust understanding of the threats of terrorism in North Africa and the Maghreb, the various governments in the region are not relenting in their counterterrorism offensives. These countries continue the application of soft and hard counterterrorism measures while facilitating information sharing and promoting international cooperation with partner nations to exorcise the scourge of terrorism in the region.

It is, however, noteworthy to observe that the near non-functionality of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) which ought to serve as a Regional Economic Community (REC) for the North African countries constitutes a major impediment to regional counterterrorism cooperation in North Africa. Unlike the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), East Africa Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development

[47] Institute of Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2022, Op. Cit.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

Community (SADC), countries of North Africa and the Maghreb have been unable to adopt and sustain regional frameworks to adequately confront the challenge of terrorism in the region. It is therefore imperative that beyond the respective national endeavours, countries of North Africa should assiduously collaborate through regional efforts to address the terrorist threats and vulnerabilities confronting them in view of the transnational nature and consequences of the threat.

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CHAPTER 13

Algeria: Terrorism and Extremist Violence Explained

Mohamed Rahali and Yahya Bouzidi

Introduction

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria is a country in North Africa with a total area of 2,381,740 square kilometres (sq km), located on geographical coordinates of 28 00 N, and 3 00E, with its frontiers extending from the Mediterranean Sea in North Africa's Maghreb region to West Africa's Sahel region.[1] Algeria shares a total land boundary of 6,734 km with six African countries notably Mali (1,359 km), Libya (989 km), Mauritania (460 km), Morocco (1941 km), Niger (951 km),

[1] "Algeria" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, accessed 2 September 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/static/2d3454ba87dc2a2fac6951d4b41d309d/AG-summary.pdf.

M. Rahali (✉) · Y. Bouzidi
Department of Political Science, University of Djillali Liabes, Sidi Bel Abbès, Algeria
e-mail: rahali.mohamed@univ-sba.dz

Y. Bouzidi
e-mail: yahyabouzidisp@gmail.com

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and Tunisia 1034 km and a coastline of more than 1200 km along the Mediterranean sea.[2]

Algeria has large deposits of mineral resources such as petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, uranium, lead, and zinc. In terms of climate, Algeria varies between arid and semi-arid and experiences dry hot summer along the coast cold winter and hot summer on the high plateau.[3]

Demographically, Algeria has an estimated population of 43 million as at July 2020 estimates with an annual population growth rate of 1.52%.[4] The ethnic composition consists of Arab-Berber (99%), while "European" is less than 1% of the population. The official languages of Algeria are Arabic and Berber or Tamazight (became official since March 2016) Specific dialects spoken include Kabyle Berber (Taqbaylit), Shawiya Berber (Tacawit), Mzab Berber, and Tuareg Berber (Tamahaq).[5] In terms of religious affiliations, an estimated 99% of the population are Muslim of the Sunni sect while Christians constitute a mere 1% of the population.

On July 5th 1962, Algeria attained political independence from France. This date is celebrated as the country's National Day Holiday in addition to 1 November, which is the Revolution Day to commemorate the Algerian revolution. Algeria has 58 provinces or wilaya(s): Adrar, Ain Defla, Ain Temouchent, Alger, Annaba, Batna, Bechar, Bejaia, Biskra, Blida, Bordj BouArreridj, Bouira and Boumerdes. Others are Chlef, Constantine, Djelfa, El Bayadh, El Oued, El Tarf, Ghardaia, Guelma, Illizi, Jijel, Khenchela, Laghouat, Mascara, Medea, Mila, Mostaganem, and M'Sila. In addition, the remaining provinces are Naama, Oran, Ouargla, Oum el Bouaghi, Relizane, Saida, Setif, Sidi Bel Abbes, Skikda, Souk Ahras, Tamanrasset, Tebessa, Tiaret, Tindouf, Tipaza, Tissemsilt, Tizi Ouzou, Tlemcen.[6] In February 2021, Timimoune, Bord Beji Mokhtar, Beni

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Algeria" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, accessed 2September 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/algeria/.

[4] "L'Algérie en Bref" ministère des affaires étrangères et de la communauté nationale à l'étranger, accessed 21 April 2024, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/algeria/#government.

[5] "Algeria" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, accessed 2 September 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/algeria/.

[6] Ibid.

Abbes, Touggourt, Ouled Djellal, In Salah, In guezzam, Djanet, El Mghayer and El Menia were added as new wilayas.[7]

Evolution of Armed Religious Groups in Algeria

At independence, Algeria inherited some alien colonial influences at odds with its social, political, and economic values that left damaging impacts on the post-colonial society. Among these influences was the emergence of political parties and associations with different ideological orientations.

The Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars is one of the first religious associations founded in Algeria, and it has had a great impact in the changes the Algerian society had come through, making it a "national religious reference". One of its prominent characteristics is the pursuit of peaceful actions during the Algerian state building process, after the independence in 1962. It had helped the political system a lot to dock the fundamental values and underpin two main objectives, one is the principles of a true, literal and pure Islam (the one attached to the strict Islamic teachings) as well as the program of resetting the Arabic language, as always claimed by the Ulemas.

Thus, members of the association were integrated in various institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Supreme Islamic Council as well as the education sector.[8] However, this did not mean that there was a complete harmony and full consensus between those who were acting in the religious field (the Association' Ulemas) and the political system actors who followed the one-party system and banned all other organisations. In addition, the choosing of the socialist ideology did not augur much with the Islamic teachings, and the incompatibility was so clear, neither in the orientations nor upon the important topics. Hence other organisational attempts had appeared such as the Association of Values founded in February 1963, whose leaders attempted to continue the work of the Association of Ulemas. The Association of Values was short-lived as it ceased to exist on 22 September 1966.

[7] 2021, un nouveau decoupage territorial pour doper le développement, https://www.aps.dz/regions/133281-2021-un-nouveau-decoupage-territorial-pour-doper-le-developpement-local, accessed 26 January 2024.

[8] Collection of International Crisis, Islamic, Violence, Reforms in Algeria, Brussels: Collection of International Crisis, Report no. 29, 30 July 2004, p. 02.

At the beginning of the 1970s, and under the influence of religious groups in the Arab Mashreq, new Islamic groups started to emerge in Algeria, the most prominent ones were the Muslim brotherhood and the Salafists which were secretly active and without a clear organisation. Some researchers interested in the origin and evolution of Islamist movements in Algeria consider the ones that emerged from the Student's Mosque based in the central university which was founded in 1968 by some students of Malek Bennabi as the oldest dynamic movement school in the country.[9] It evolved from enthusiastic youths who organised many advocacy activities such like seminars, lectures and book fairs, in addition to those organised in the mosques, and as they expanded their actions, the idea of moving from spontaneity and random actions with the need for an organisation to supervise and organise the work. This shift in the movement will be seen as a burn-out for the emergence of a certain self-conscious and organised entity for the forthcoming stages.[10] Next, came the Muslim Brotherhood organisation led by Mahfoud Nahnah,[11] who was at the origin of the first protest against the political system which imposed the socialist orientation contained in the political chart of 1976. To make his voice heard, Nahnah broke the telephone poles, an action for which he was put into jail along with Mohamed Bouslimani.[12] From

[9] Al Tahir Saoud, Islamic Movement in Algeria: Historical and Ideological Roots, Dubai: Al Mesbar Center for Research and Studies, p 444, 1st Edition, August 2012.

[10] Ibid., p. 433.

[11] Is the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Algeria (the international trend) born on January 28th 1942 in the city of Blida (50 km south west of Algiers), educated in the reformist schools founded by the Algerian national movement and who participated in the liberation revolution, completed all his education phases in Algeria and entered the field of Islamic Da'wa, he founded the Association of Guidance and Reform, then the Hamas Party which changed later into the Movement for Society of Peace HIMS, he also participated in the presidential elections in 1995, then was banned to run for the polls of 1999, he constantly refused any use of violence and armed actions, he died on 19/06/2003, for more details about his biography and ideas, see: Wasfi Ashour Abou Zaid, Farewell..Mahfouz Nahnah: Symbol of Moderate Islam in Algeria, Cairo: Islamic House for Publishing and Distribution, 1st Edition, 2003.

[12] Born on May 5th 1941 in Blida (50 km south west of Algiers) amid a conservative and resistant family, memorized the Quran and had his first education in the schools of the National movement where he met his companion Mahfoud Nahnah, joined the revolution in its first days and after the independence he carried on the way of science education and reformism, he worked as a school teacher then a supervisor until 1968, he joined the Central university in the same year and got graduated in Arabic language in 1972, for his political career and as a Moujahid (resistant) he was appointed as the head

1971 to 1975, it appeared as small groups in populated neighbourhoods at the local level, who started to fight against the moral corruption and social decay signs. However, the intelligence services tracked them down, especially the one led by Cheikh Othman. The intelligence services also found out that the "Mosque of Peace" in the city of Sidi Bel Abbes was their headquarters, leading to the discovery of other plans mooted by the group. Similar Jihadist groups also emerged secretly in many other cities, all working in secret and looking for potential members in the mosques through the circles of science and among the new penitents.[13]

The rise of the Islamist movements coincided with some internal and external developments, the most important of them being the death of the President Houari Boumedienne, and his succession by President Chadli Benjadid. The fall of the oil prices pushed the Algerian economy into a crisis that caused the uprising and the events of October 1988. These events led to the adoption of a new constitution that established the rules of a multi-party system instead of the one-party regime that existed till then. At the international level, two very important events happened which had enormous impacts on the evolution of Islamist movements. First was the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran led by Shiite cleric "Ayatollah Khomeini" and his emergence as Supreme Leader of the country in December 1979. It is believed that its success somehow encouraged the Algerians to do the same and reproduce similar experience. The second event was the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in the same year while led to the outbreak of Afghani jihad known popularly as the Mujahideen resistance, which gave an opportunity

of the cultural committee at the division of the Liberation National Front Party division of the city of Blida, and as his ideological convictions were quite different from the socialist one, he got pushed away. He fought against the imposition of the political chart of 1976 on the Muslim Algerian population, for which he was put in prison for three years in the same year in the case of "Almohads movement", after the prison, in 1991 worked in the Association of Guidance and Reform where he headed it as a successor of Mahfoud Nahnah, on behalf of the association he called all the Algerians for the peaceful dialogue in the first association's manifest, which disappointed some of his extremist opponents who raided his house and assassinated him on the 26 of November 1993, and his body was discovered on the December 28 1994, for more details, refer to: Cheikh Mohamed Bouslimani, the Algerian association of guidance and reform on the following website: https://bit.ly/2msTgzG.

[13] Al Tahir Saoud, ibid., pp. 369–370.

to thousands of young people from Arabic countries travel to Afghanistan to help the Afghans in the accompanying war.[14]

The President Chadli Benjedid's policies paved the way for the Islamist movements to operate and there were conflicts and debates among the various ideological trends especially with the Marxists, but in general, it was dualism between the Islamic and the secular. Some cases of violence were recorded mainly in the universities; most notably one is the incident in the University of Ben Aknoun which caused the huge number of Islamists gathering ever at the Central University in Algiers.[15] The violence created an impression with the security services that there existed an opposition force worth considering as the discipline and that their organisation within the Islamists on the ground indicated that a secret organisation was overseeing it.[16]

This Islamic bloc soon started to disintegrate in the face of other currents due to the differentiation of the Islamic intellectual stripes. This is because there have been many divisions into the Algerian Islamic movement. In other words, the same currents that once existed in the Machrek started to emerge but with specifics peculiar to the local environment. For instance, the Brotherhood was divided into two; the globalists (internationalists) led by Mahfoud Nahnah, and the locals, represented by Abdallah Jaballah. In addition, the Algerianizing effects associated with the great thinker Malek Bennabi, there were debates between the Salafists and the Muslim Brotherhood in which both attributed the jihadist activism to its rival. However, a closer observation of the various developments and interactions experienced, indicated that this is multi-striped and cannot be attributed to one group alone. In addition, it crossed many phases, sourcing from both of them, then, gradually tended to have its own doctrinal and intellectual references till it became independent.

[14] For more details on how Algerian Islamists interacted with the Afghan jihad and how it influenced them, see:

Noureddine Touimi, Afghan Jihad from Brzezinski to Belmokhtar, First Part, Ghardaya: Sobhi House for Printing and Publishing, 1st Edition, 2017.

[15] The gathering of Friday November 12 1982 after the bloody events at the university campus of Ben Aknoun, when a student in the International Languages Department, named Kamal Amzal fell victim of a dispute over the election of the free committee, see:

Ahmida Ayashi, Islamic Movement in Algeria: Roots—the Symbols—the Path, Algeria: New Al Nagah Publishing, 2nd Edition, 1993, p. 157.

[16] Ahmida Ayashi, ibid., pp. 160–161.

The first group that took military action is the one led by Mustapha Bouyali who previously was a member of the "National Liberation Army" and a member of the "Socialist Forces Front", and who later on, joined once again the "National Liberation Front Party" for a period of time. His religious affiliations were not very clear, as he did not belong to any of the Islamic organisations that have emerged and developed over the late sixties and early seventies, especially the Salafists and its jihadist arm.[17]

From 1978 to mid-1982, his focus was on delivering critical speeches and religious lessons while urging the young people to rally against sinful actions. Subsequently, in 1982, he called for the armed actions and thereafter went underground in April of the same year following which he started to gather his men to elaborate the start of his plan which consisted in blowing out some critical infrastructure and sensible points around the capital Algiers (airport, TV office, liquor plants, Court, women union office, Al Aurassi Hotel).[18] To achieve this plan, he carried out robberies on many sites and started to gather necessary equipment such as explosives. On the other hand, the group of Bouyali has expanded its movement to include the eastern, western, and southern parts of the country, some of its men called the trusted members of the Islamic movement for support and help after they have pledged allegiance to their leader Bouyali as an "Emir".

During the year 1982, the group carried out armed actions against the security forces. It also distributed subversive leaflets calling for Jihad against the state accusing the regime of tyranny and disbelief using audio-tapes with the voice of Bouyali himself calling on Algerian scholars to support him, and the people to join his group.[19] He also planned to assassinate some of the high officers in the Algerian regime such as the prime minister, the head of the National Liberation Front Party, but the plan was thwarted by security forces who discovered the plan.

Consequently, Bouyali was neither able to make a big impact nor pull the rest of the Islamist groups together and his group remained isolated from the Islamist groups such that in the end, it found itself face to

[17] Collection of International Crisis, ibid., p. 02.

[18] Al Tahir Saoud, ibid., pp. 403–404.

[19] AbouJarra Soltani, the Roots of the Conflict in Algeria, Algeria: Al Umma House for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2nd Edition, 1999, pp. 166–168.

face with the security forces and in an unequal combat capacity.[20] Some analysts consider it more accurate to say that Bouyali action was more a rebellious offshoot in the face of the "FLN" and the "ALN" expressing itself into an Islamic frameworks against the ideology imposed by the political power in the 1980s, as "the Socialist Forces Front" had walked the same path for a different ideology back in the 1960s.[21]

After the death of Bouyali, the Islamic movement had lived a big introversion around itself and in significant decline until the uprisings of October 1988 when a turning point in the history of Algeria in general and particularly on the Islamic movement.[22] This could partly be attributed to the political changes in the country with emphasis on the multiparty, which allowed Islamic movements to move from secrecy and restriction to openness. The attempts of the Islamists to unite and form one organisational framework into the body called the "Islamic League" had failed largely as a result of the divergence of views that prevailed as the quest for leadership on the political scene took over.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Algeria entered into a political crisis that quickly became a security crisis after the followers of the Islamic movement moved into armed action right after the election process was stopped. The Islamic Salvation Front, who won a majority of the seats in the parliament in the first round, became very violent. During this period, many groups emerged from a religious background based on a specific religious thought and understanding but were limited in influence. They therefore pursued violent actions to achieve political objectives. Yet, despite the big efforts made by the political system in place to eradicate them, some still survived.

The Islamic Salvation Front (ISF/FIS), however, dominated the scene, as it swept across all spaces and became the loudest voice among the Islamists. The vocal Ali Belhadj emerged prominent with his sharp speeches that made the Islamic Salvation Front was overwhelmingly successful in Algeria's first pluralist elections. This demonstrated the extent to which it was able to mobilise resources and energy to create

[20] Ahmida Ayashi, ibid., p. 163.

[21] Collection of International Crisis, Op. Cit. p. 03.

[22] Ahmida Ayashi, Op. Cit. p. 164.

the general surprise.[23] It is necessary to notice that at this stage the ISF was accused of incitement and using violence, especially when it called for building popular militias during the second Gulf war in the spirit of Jihad against American troops and when its members challenged the President's rejection of their demand.[24]

Algeria's political leadership was concerned about the successes achieved by the FIS (ISF) party in the elections, the manifestations or even the strikes they could lead in the streets. Consequently, in the bid to block its way, the Algerian army first started to cut off its resources and dismantle its political structure, but the increasing violence from both parties rapidly led to an intervention of the army which resulted in the emergence of armed radical movements. This led to the closure of the political and public spaces which subsequently pushed the Islamic opposition to resort to violent extremism.[25]

Thus, major transformations from political opposition to violent extremism occurred after the cancellation of the election in which the Islamic Front (FIS) won the majority in parliament and the (FIS) was banned from any political work. Its leaders, notably Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, were put in prison along with about 700 members representing the Wilaya (District) assembly presidents and mayors of municipalities.[26] For many Islamists, the conviction was clear that a peaceful process through the political action to build an Islamic State was impossible, therefore the alternative was the use of force to seize power. Among them were those who belonged to the Bouyali group and were released during the events of October 1988. Meanwhile, the members of the peaceful approach in FIS retreated, hence the groups which agreed on the armed actions started to form. However, they held divergent views concerning the level of violence to be used. The most extremists among

[23] The Islamic Front for Salvation won the elections in 850 municipalities from a total of 1541, with a rate of 54%, while the ruling National Liberation Front Party could not get more than 28%, with an abstention of 35%, for more details see: Riad Al-Sidawi, Democratic Elections and Violence in Algeria, in: Sulayman Al-Riyashi and Others, Algerian Conflict: Political, Social, Cultural and Economic Background, Beirut: Arabic Unity Studies Center, Arabic Future Book Series (11), 2nd Edition, August 1999, p. 531.

[24] Ahmida Ayashi, Op. Cit.

[25] Riad Al-Sidawi, Op. Cit. pp. 540–541.

[26] Mohamed Khogah, Years of Chaos and Madness: Decline to Violence, b.d.n. 1st edition, 2000, p. 22.

them targeted the whole society which they accused of disbelief, while others targeted only the security forces and the political officials.

The Islamic armed groups had gone through two main stages:

First Stage (1991–1999)

Islamist groups were strong and influential enough to achieve many significant successes which contributed to the political uncertainties and confusion in the country caused by both internal problems and external pressures. During this period, they took control over villages and rural areas where the largest and bloodiest operations took place later. However, these operations were limited and didn't affect the core of the power status, especially when the regime organised the presidential elections of 1995 upon which it recovered some internal legitimacy. The importance of these elections is the fact that they filled the constitutional gap caused by the resignation of President Chadli Benjedid and the assassination of his successor, the President Mohamed Boudiaf.

The failure of the armed groups to overthrow the regime occurred at a time during which two currents appeared. The first tended to answer the regime's call for peace, whereas the second refused all peace talks and became increasingly radicalised. The latter blamed the society for its participation in elections and was hence accused of apostasy, making it a target for the 1997 massacres.

Second Stage (After 1999)

The election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika enabled the power elites to regain and sustain its legitimacy. President Bouteflika had very good knowledge of diplomacy, having served as foreign minister for almost a decade in the governments of President Houari Boumedienne. The new administration carried out military strikes against the Islamists, and the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York helped to strengthen the position of Algeria in its fight against terrorism.[27] Subsequently, the Bouteflika

[27] Suddenly and due to the terrorist attacks on the American soil in 2001, Algeria has become an important partner, and all sights turned towards Algeria who was seen as a source of the violent extremism, Washington lifted the weapons embargo off Algeria who was included into "the Trans-Saharan counter terrorism initiative" later on named "Partnership for combating terrorism in the Sahara" and "The NATO Mediterranean

administration embarked on secret negotiations between the army and the armed groups. The outcome was the "Civil Harmony Programme" which involves guarantees of the civil rights of members of the armed groups within the framework of what was described as "civil reconciliation".

At this same stage, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) lost their favourable environment which previously served as its social incubator of sympathies at inception, such that its loyalists dwindled numerically culminating to a noticeable decline in the number of terrorist activities from 1996. Available records indicate that recorded terrorist incidents were 7562 acts in 1995, compared to 5899 in the year before, and it eventually reduced to 2419 in 1998 and 2407 in 2000. By 2002, the number of the armed groups decreased to between 650 and 700 from 27,000 in 1996.[28] Unlike in the past, their operations became rare with little impacts.

These terrorist attacks caused 13,801 casualties among which not less than 8,086 dead and 5715 injured in 1995, while in 1996 there were 10,779 casualties of which 5,121 were dead while 5,658 were injured. In 1998, the number of casualties was 7,021 (3,058 dead and 3,963 injured) and in 2000, almost half of the casualties were caused by terrorist attacks which had a casualty of 3,443 comprising 1,573 deaths and 1,872 injured.[29]

In an international context, the armed groups in Algeria have reacted with the developments in terms of global Jihad movement especially after the emergence of Al-Qaeda and the 2001 attacks and accompanying incidents. Some of the Islamists pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda leading to the emergence of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI). The new organisation began operation in different parts of the country and was reinforced by similar entities that were already in neighbouring countries

Dialogue" all these initiatives aimed to strengthen cooperation to combat terrorism, and since 2004 Algeria is attending the NATO meetings in Brussels and in the Mediterranean military manoeuvres in partnership with NATO, in return Washington provided Algeria with satellite images and intelligence, see: Dalia Ghanim, Algeria on the Verge: What did the Seventeen Years of Bouteflika accomplished, Carnegie Middle East, 28/04,2016 see link: https://carnegie-mec.org/2016/04/28/ar-pub-63483.

[28] Mohamed Mokadim, Map of the Armed Islamic Organizations in Algeria: Six Groups and 700 Agent keep the tension, Al Hureya Newspaper, see link: http://www.alhayat.com/article/1116374.

[29] Elias Boukraa (translation of Khalil Ahmed Khalil), Algeria: the Sacred Horror, Beirut: Al Farabi House, 1st edition, 2003, p. 308.

such as Mali, Chad, and Libya. The group exploited the Azawad case and the Tuareg nationalism to establish connections within the Sahel and the Maghreb. Their main operations consisted of the kidnapping of foreign tourists who were taken hostage to demand ransoms for their release. The AQMI also engaged in cross-border smuggling and in other illicit transnational criminal activities.

The violent collapse of Qaddafi's regime in Libya contributed immensely to sustain the spread of Al-Qaeda influence in the whole Maghreb, Emirate of Sahel and the Sahara as they called it at the time. In this region, a battalion named "Blood Signatories" led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar also known as "Khaled Abu Alabbas" and nicknamed as "Al-A'war" the one-eyed, operated an attack in January 2013 in a gas facility at In-Amenas in the south of Algeria which resulted to the killing of 38 workers.[30]

The uprisings that took place in some Arab countries and that aimed to political system change as of 2011 and their subsequent developments, in addition to the rise of Islamic State which removed Al-Qaeda from the leadership position of global Jihadist movements especially after taking control over a large areas between Iraq and Syria and its announcement of the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate in 2014 with capital at Mosul (Iraq) while inviting all jihadists to come and join the group.[31] The number of Algerians that accepted the ISIS invitation was not that significant as official sources estimated that it did not exceed 63 which is considered a small number when compared to the Tunisians or Moroccans.[32]

[30] Mohamed Abu Ruman, Is it the Spring of Al Qaeda, in: Group of Researchers, the Rise of the Religious Radicalism in the Arab World: Reasons, Indicators and Counter-Strategies, Oman: Friedrich Ebert Establishment, 1st edition, 2014, p. 19.

[31] For more information on the Islamic State (IS), please use sources like:

- Fawaz Gerges, (translation by Mohamed Shia), Daesh to Where: Post Qaeda Jihadi, Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1st edition, May 2016.

- Group of Researchers, editing by Fatima Alsamadi, "Islamic State" Organization: Development, Impact, and Future, Doha: Al Jazeera Studies Center, Beirut: Al Arabiya for Science Publishing House, 1st edition, 2016.

[32] Dalia Ghanim, Why Algeria Isn't Exporting Jihadis, Carnegie Middle East, 11/08/2015, use link: https://bit.ly/2koc5mO.

In Algeria, an organisation named "Ajnad Al Khilafa" or Soldiers of the Caliphate announced its allegiance to Islamic State after defecting from AQMI. It attracted the world's attention by kidnapping and assassinating Hervé Gourdel in the east of Algiers, in September 2014 before the Army could kill 24 of its elements that formed its hard core.[33] In general, the picture of the jihadists seems to be very weak in Algeria. Nonetheless, the country still witnesses some local but very limited Jihadist incidents once in a while especially in regions like the Zbarbar Mountains on the Mediterranean Sea shore. These incidents are mainly carried out by either elements of autonomous groups, or some who are still under the allegiance of AQMI which came after the Salafist Group for preaching and combat (GSPC), that succeeded the Islamic Armed Group (GIA).[34]

Survey of Armed Religious Groups That Emerged in Algeria

Many armed groups emerged after the escalation of violence in 1992 in Algeria, some have simply disappeared while others faded under divisions or due to the confrontation with the army. Other organisations emerged from the wombs of other groups through coalition or unification which is an ongoing process due to internal or external conditions. While it is quite difficult to monitor all these groups and follow their evolution to the end, this paper focuses on the most important ones and which are as follows:

The Islamic Armed Movement (MIA) 1991–1994

It held its founding conference in February 1992 in the mountains of Zbarbar during the month of Ramadan, in the east of Algiers. Most of its elements belonged to the Bouyali Movement., The movement named Abdelkader Shabouti whose death in 1993 weakened as the general leader of the group. Subsequently, the group entered into conflicts with other groups leading to its decline and demise at the end.[35]

[33] Yakeen Hosam Al Din, Al Qaeda and Daesh in Algeria… the Lost Struggle, New Arabi, 24/07/2015, see link: https://bit.ly/2kxdzLM.

[34] Dhalia Ghanim, ibid.

[35] Elias Boukraa, ibid.

The Movement for the Islamic State (1991–1998)

The Movement for the Islamic State (MEI) was founded in 1991 by Said Makhloufi, who was a key foundation member of the FIS party and Editor-in-Chief of the daily news, *Al-Munqid* (the Savior) from 1989 to 1991. He later joined the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA). Following its cleansing and big divergence with Djamal Zitouni, the Islamic State found its own path for either organic or military independence. However, due to the small number of its members and withdrawal of some members to join the GIA as well as confrontation with security forces, the MEI faded away, and by 1996, only 60 elements were still in the group.[36]

The Remaining in Covenant

Following an initiative of Said Makhloufi, Qamar Eddine Khabanne, and Oussama Madani (the son of Abbassi Madani), this organisation was founded in July 1991, and it claimed its first operation in 1992, during the first years of its emergence. The impact of its action was somehow limited and was mainly located in the capital city of Algiers and its nearest suburbs. It dropped the truce principle in 1997 and embraced the GIA terrorism activities.[37]

Islamic Front for Armed Jihad (Struggle)

The Islamic Front for Armed Jihad (FIDA) was formed in 1993 following incitement of Algerians who rallied around Mohamed Said within the "crisis cell" created after the arrest of the FIS leader. One of its characteristics is that it was an elite terrorist organisation whose members possessed a university education. Its main targets were to commit audacious violent acts which would have a big impact such as targeting high-level State officials, politicians, artists, intellectuals and journalists. It was basically formed with two cells, one in charge of intelligence and information collection about targeted individuals, while the second cell was dedicated to execute operations.[38]

[36] Ibid., p. 274.

[37] Ibid., pp. 274–275.

[38] Ibid., p. 275.

The Islamic Salvation Army

The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) was founded in July 1994 as an armed branch of the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF). Madani Mezrag who was the national leader of this organisation, made statements in which he expressed his regret for some shameful cases of rape committed by other armed groups, and called these groups to remain as "groups of principles not mercenaries". He also called to provide the Groups with a law that defines the foundations and principles for these groups to work with and the limits not to cross. This was targeted at as a step to isolate the elements of turmoil that are trying to divert the struggle from its main goals, and which is preventing the groups from uniting. He declared his full support for the opposition parties meeting in Rome, he called the president Liamine Zeroual to abandon the policy of oppression and militancy and to open a page of dialogue instead.[39]

In 1997, Madani Mezrag, the commander of the Islamic Army entered in negotiations with the Algerian authorities, which ended with the renunciation of the armed actions along with 4000 of his fighters who agreed to come down from the mountains and surrender their weapons in the same year.[40]

Armed Islamic Group

In 1992, Mansour Meliani established the GIA with some returnees that previously fought as part of the Mujahidin in Afghanistan. The GIA also recruited membership from lower social strata, especially those that defected from the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) after the Algerian Government banned the group. The membership of the GIA was estimated to be between 20,000 and 25,000 persons, and it largely localised its activities in the eastern and western Atlas Mountains, at the borders with Morocco, Tunisia and in the Sahara down in the south. In its ideological approach, the GIA stood upon a Fatwa of AbdelHaq ElAyayda who is considered as one of the founders of the FIS. In line with this

[39] Sefereen Laba (translation by Hamada Ibrahim), the Algerian Islamists between ballots and the Jungle, Cairo: High Council for Culture, 2003, p. 183.

[40] Mohamed Mahmoud Abou almaali, Al Qaeda and Affiliates in Azwad: the beginning and Secrets of Expanding, Doha: Al Jazeera Studies Center, Beirut: Al Arabiya Science Publishers House, 1st edition, 2014, p. 30.

Fatwa, the group decided that all rulers of Algeria without exception are atoned, and so are all those who collaborate or work with them. The implication was the translation of the Fatwa as a series of assassinations at all levels. From its inception, the Group aimed to overthrow the secular regime and replace it with an Islamic one. It remained in opposition to any truce or dialogue with the government, and its financial and logistics support came mainly from Algerians living abroad, especially those in the Western Europe.

The GIA began to adopt armed violence at the beginning of 1992, after the cancellation of the first multi-party parliamentary elections, in which the FIS won a majority during the first round in December 1991. A new organisation split out of GIA in 1998 and called itself the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). It was the GSPC that later became Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) in 2007.[41]

Le Group Salafiste pour la Prediction et le Combat (1998–2007)

The foundation of *Le Group Salafiste pour la Prediction et le Combat* (GSPC), otherwise referred as *the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat*, comes from a split out of the Islamic Armed Group (GIA), after disagreements and rivalries over leadership of the armed organisation, in addition to the religious interpretation of Jihad.[42] Some analysts view the GSPC as having emerged as a middle ground between two main contending Islamic groups in Algeria in the mid-1990s. The first trend is the Zouabriyah (in reference to Anteur Zouabri) who controlled the GIA, who accused the society of atonement since it did not fight the apostate rulers, as per their extremist text readings. The second trend preferred to engage in the peace process proposed by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika called the "National Reconciliation". This process involved handing over weapons and ceasing all armed actions, and this trend was mainly of the members of the Islamic Salvation Army.

Under these circumstances, the GSPC emerged as a group refusing to lay down the weapons and to come down from the mountains, even when the group's vision of atonement does not include the whole

[41] The Armed Islamic Gama'a, Al Jazeera Website, 10/02/2014, see link: https://bit.ly/2Ru29EB.

[42] Mohamed Mokadim, ibid.

Algerian society. It accused the Zwabriyah of bloody murders done by "Kharijites", but nonetheless, his commitment to fight the Algerian army remained unchangeable.[43] The group continued its operations until they announced their allegiance to Osama Bin Laden in 2007 and changed its name to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI).

Al Qaeda au Maghreb Islamique

As its name suggests, the Al Qaeda au Maghreb Islamique (AQMI) otherwise referred as the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), transcends single national geographic boundaries spreading across the Maghreb countries of North Africa. However, Algeria remained its core root. It was founded after the announcement of the group's allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2007 by Abdul Malik Droudkal known as "Abu Mous'ab Abdel Wadoud", who was the Emir (leader) of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The activities of this organisation emerged significantly in the south of Algeria under the leadership of "Mokhtar Belmokhtar", who settled in the Azawad region that stretched between Algeria, Mali, and Niger. The Azawad region provided a safe haven for the hunted elements of Groupe Islamique Armee (GIA) or armed Islamic groups, fighting in Libya, fighters in Tunisia, a few Jihadist groups and individuals from Morocco, Mauritania, and Nigeria, who formed what is called "the Mujahidin of the Islamic Maghreb".[44] The Organisation's strategy was based on the expansion over the Azawad province and relied on the subscription network in the whole region. It sent elements in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Senegal to settle down and start to recruit new members to join the organisation.[45]

The AQMI launched numerous attacks in the whole region to show its transnational nature and engaged in hostage taking and kidnapping for ransom which increased dramatically as the AQMI presence grew in the Sahel region. This period coincided with the end of the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali and Niger in the mid-1990s and one of its clandestine actions was the kidnapping of 32 European tourists in 2003 in the south of Algeria.

[43] Mohamed Mahmoud Abou almaali, ibid., p. 33.

[44] Ibid., p.39.

[45] Ibid., p. 42.

AQMI operations continued further after 2007 as the group kidnapping operations focused on citizens of the countries that were ready to pay the ransom.[46] The group obtained substantial financial resources through hostage-taking such that it earned a ransom of Euros 183 million by kidnapping about 80 western hostages. According to the Terrorism Research Analysis Center (TRAC), the organisation is supposed to have collected about 50 million dollars from hostages-taking.[47]

It is important to note that despite incessant military strikes either by the Algerian army or the armies of neighbouring countries which facilitated the surrender of dozens of its members, AQMI still presents a real security threat in the whole region. This is because it takes advantage of the peculiarities of the region and the continuous crises in both Mali and Libya.

Most Important Heads of Islamist Armed Groups

Some of the very notable Islamist leaders are Abdul Haq Elayayda, Djamel Zitouni, Anteur Zouabri, Abdelmalik Gouri, and Mokhtar Belmokhtar. Others are Madani Mezrag, Abdelrezak "El Para", Hassan Hattab, Nabil Sahraoui, and Abdelmalek Droudkal. A brief highlight on each are presented below.

Abdul HaqElayayda

Abdul Haq Elayayda, who was nicknamed as "Abou Adlane", began his radical activity in 1992. He founded the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) which is considered the most brutal and bloodiest extremist group in Algeria during the 1990s. Abou Adlane took refuge in Morocco one year after he founded GIA and was sentenced to death by absentia but was eventually captured and returned to the Algerian Government in 1994 following which he spent 12 years in prison then was released in 2006.[48]

[46] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel and Sahara, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2012, p. 09.

[47] Abeer Shelighem, Daesh and Jihadi Movements in West Africa, in: Group of Researchers, Daesh and Co. Ideology—Takfir—Script, Dubai: Al-Mesbar Studies and Researches Center, Book 123, 1st edition, March 2017, p. 172.

[48] Massoud Hodna, « Princes of Blood» …10 Extremists Horrified Algerians, Moroccan Voices, 27/05/2017, see link: https://bit.ly/2kocDZU.

Djamel Zitouni

Djamel Zitouni began his militant activity as a leader (Emir) of the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) in 1994 but he got killed in 1996 by the "Islamic League for Preaching and combat", a splinter from the Islamic Armed Group. Zitouni was known for the murder and beheading of the monks of Tibhirine in Medea at the south west of Algiers in 1996.[49] He was nicknamed "Abou Abdel Rahmane Amine".

Anteur Zouabri

Anteur Zouabri was born at Boufarik near the city of Blida 50 kilometres west of Algiers in 1970. Zouabri joined the Jihadiyine (Fighters) in 1991 and was one of the leaders of the first rank in the GIA.[50] In 1996, he replaced Djamel Zitouni and assumed the leadership of the Group. Zouabri was also known for his terrible bloodshed since he ordered his members to commit suicide operations without even sparing no civilians. He considered Muslims those who pledged allegiance to him and those who did not as infidels. Hence their women were to be raped due to the fatwa he issued. His name was synonymous with terror and caused panic among Algerians during his reign as the Emir of GIA. He could even carry out bombings in the daylight and even in Ramadan. The army killed him in 2002, and exposed his body to the journalists to confirm his death to the people.[51]

Abdelmalik Gouri

Abdelmalik Gouri began his militant activity in 1995 and was known for the major attacks that rocked the government palace and the United Nations office in Algiers in 2007. Since he was behind the planning, he was a close associate to the head of the AQMI leader Abdelmalek Droudkal before he split from him. Subsequently, he pledged allegiance to ISIS and founded the so-called "Soldiers of the Caliphate". Gouri claimed responsibility for the abduction and murder of the French citizen

[49] Ibid.

[50] Interview with the Emir of Armed Islamic Djama'a Abou Talha Antar Zwabri, Al Jama'a Magazine, 10th edition, September 1996, p. 05.

[51] Massoud Hodna, ibid.

on tour in Algeria Hervé Gourdel in 2013. The Algerian Army killed him.[52]Abdelmalik Gouri was nicknamed "Khaled Abu Suleiman".

Mokhtar Belmokhtar

Mokhtar Belmokhtar was born in Ghardaia on 6 June 1972. He dropped out of high school and began a new life committed to religion having been influenced by the Jihad in Afghanistan. In 1991, Belmokhtar travelled to Afghanistan and stayed about a year and a half after which he returned to Algeria in the late of 1992 through Morocco.[53] During this journey, he was very imbued by the Jihadist ideology and joined the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and subsequently the GSPC and later formed the "Signatories of Blood". His most dangerous operation was the attack on "Tiguentourine" Gas plant in the south of Algeria in 2013 that cost the lives of 23 foreign workers. The United States of America set a bounty reward of 5 million US dollars for his capture, while he runs from death sentence in absentia pronounced in his case in Algeria.[54]

Madani Mezrag

Madani Mezrag was born in 1960 in the province of Jijel in the west of Algeria. Upon completion of his High School education, he began trading between Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya where he was put in prison for a short time in 1983. In the aftermath of his release from prison, he returned to Algeria and joined the secret organisation of Ennahda, led by Abdullah Djaballah then left it and joined the Islamic Front for Salvation in 1991, appointed as a member for its advisory council in Jijel. In 1992, he joined the first armed organisations formed under the banner of the Islamic Front in the mountains and became the leader of the Islamic Salvation Army. From January 1995, he entered into negotiations with the security forces that resulted in the surrender of thousands of fighters under his command. Subsequently, they came out of the mountain to lay down their weapons following the signing of the truce with Algerian

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] For more information on the life of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, see following book, whose author comes from the same birthtown: Noureddine Touimi, ibid., pp. 319–407.

army commandment as the presidential amnesty decreed by the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2000.[55]

Abdelrezak "El Para"

Abdelrezak "El Para's" real name is "Ammari Saifi". He was born in Guelma, a city located 500 km east of Algiers. In the mid-1980s, he joined the special paratroops of the Algerian army in Biskra about 600 km south east of Algiers and received a high degree of training from militants which enabled him shortly to emerge within the elite forces. He was known for his nervousness, which caused him a lot of troubles with his officers and with the military authorities. The most remarkable one is what happened on 3rd August 1987, when the military court sentenced him to prison for the purpose of "violation of general military instructions". At the end of his contract, he was removed from the lists of the military personnel on 30 April 1991, due to too many reports stating his Islamic tendencies, his spirit of insubordination and his numerous violations of instructions seemingly due to his temperament. As violence escalated in Algeria at the beginning of 1992, he joined the GIA at the time of the death of Djamel Zitouni in July 1996. Following disputes raised over the leadership in general and about the "legitimacy" of Anteur Zouabri at the top of the organisation, "El Para" with "Hassan Hattab" decided to split from the GIA and to form the GSPC. His most important operation was the kidnapping of western tourists in the Sahara, in March 2004. He was captured by an armed group from Chad and after long negotiations including interventions of many parties, "El Para" was delivered to the Algerian services and faced a sentence of life imprisonment.[56]

Hassan Hattab

Hassan Hattab was nicknamed "Abou Hamza". He was born on 14 January 1967 in Rouiba, a small city near Algiers. He founded the GSPC and emerged the leader. Hassan Hattab imbued himself with the Jihadist

[55] Madani Mezraq, Al Jazeera website, 08/12/2014, see link: https://bit.ly/2ksATdr.

[56] Mohamed Mokadim, Abdel Rezaq "Al Para": From a Parachooter to "Prince of Desert" to Prison, Al Hayat Newspaper, 08/11/2004, see link: http://www.alhayat.com/article/1910707.

ideas quite early, and joined the ranks of the Islamic state movement founded by "Said Makhloufi" in January 1992. By 1994, he became a member of the GIA from where he defected in 1996 to form the GSPC in September 14 1998. He was chosen as a provisional leader in April 1999, and emerged as an official leader in August 1999, after the killing of Abdelmadjid Dichou nicknamed "Abu Mus'ab". Subsequently, Hassan Hattab continued to lead the Group until the summer of 2003. By 22 September 2003, he surrendered to the Algerian security services but was released in 25 December 2011, and under judicial control.[57]

Nabil Sahraoui

Nabil Sahraoui was born on 25 September 1966, in the city of Batna about 450 km southeast of Algiers. He graduated with a degree in thermal energy engineering. In his hometown, he was known for Islamic tendencies since his childhood. In Batna, he organised religious lectures and workshops in the mosque of "Djaafar Bin Abi Taleb", before he became an activist within the Islamic Salvation Front after its formation in 1989. Following the abolition of the electoral process in 1992, he founded the first Islamic armed group cells and was appointed as Emir (leader) of the Fifth Region in 1995 which included the eastern region of Algeria. He remained so until the formation of the GSPC when he was the isolated leader of the Fifth Region, but emerged leader again in 2003 after Hattab's resignation. He was killed by the Algerian army in 2004.[58]

Abdelmalek Droudkal

Abdelmalek Droudkal joined the Department of Chemistry at the University of Technologies of Blida about 50 km southwest of Algiers, where he spent three years before joining the stronghold of the GIA under the request of "Said Makhloufi". He was a specialist in bomb manufacturing

[57] Hassan Hattab Founder of « The Repentant» for Salafi Group for Da'wa and Jihad in Algeria, Islamist Movements Website, see link: https://www.islamist-movements.com/33033.

[58] Mohamed Mokadim, Nabil Sahrawi: From Savior Engineer to Leader of the Salafi Group, Al Hayat Newspaper, 21/6/2004, see link: http://www.alhayat.com/article/1211331.

and was appointed in 1996 as foreman of bombs manufacturing workshops at the second region located east of Algiers. He was also responsible for military training and education of members of the group, until he succeeded "Nabil Sahraoui", who died in the summer of 2004 as leader of the GSPC.[59] In 2007, the Salafist Group pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda and changed its name to the "Al-Qaeda organisation in the Islamic Maghreb". To this day he is still sought by either the Algerian security forces or the UN Security Council for his participation in financing Al-Qaeda and supporting its activity.[60]

Counterterrorism Measures Adopted in Algeria

In its fight against Islamic groups, Algeria pursued an integrated strategy that included security, political, cultural and social dimensions.

First: The Internal Security Mechanisms

Internally, the security strategy is based on various mechanisms, the most of which are the following:

a. The establishment of a structure for security coordination in 1992, that includes all actors involved, especially the defence and security services such as the national popular army, national police, and national gendarmerie.
b. The creation of one command administration called (Operational sector) in all Wilayas (Districts) by 1993 to coordinate security efforts while monitoring operations between services.
c. Founding a municipal guard to contribute and participate in maintaining public security and peace at a local level and participate in fighting terrorism.
d. The creation of units of self-defence and terrorism resistance composed by volunteer citizens under the responsibility of authorities in charge of security and public order to allow citizens to protect

[59] Murad Mahamed, The Full Story for Droudkal…from Technology Student to Leading Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghrib, Daily Mehwer Newspaper, 18/3/2015, see link: https://bit.ly/2kV5tg5.

[60] Massoud Hodna, ibid.

and defend rural areas where rape, robberies and murder acts were committed.[61]

Externally, Algeria entered into some inter-state agreements with neighbouring countries to coordinate military actions and share beneficial information and intelligence needed to combat terrorism including conducting joint operations. These measures were informed by the realisation of external expansion of the armed groups beyond national territories. Thus, in 2009, Algeria, Mali, Libya, Niger, and Mauritania all approved a security plan based primarily on forming a military force composed of 25,000 soldiers out of the ranks of their regular armies in cooperation with the tribal militia deployed in the Sahara from Tuaregs, Arabs, and others to ensure the implementation.[62] It also recommended supporting government control of international borders in these regions. A military cooperation committee was founded by Algeria and Tunisia to exchange intelligence information about all criminal and terrorist networks between the two countries, as well as the improvement of coordination of border administration. The Libyan authorities participated in the first talks of border administration before Libya was hampered by institutional collapse.[63]

Second: The Political Mechanisms

Internally, the political strategy consisted of three initiatives that gave a chance to the members of the armed groups to review their options and choices and to return to normal life as citizens, through the Mercy Law, the Civil Harmony Law and finally the Law for National Reconciliation.

a. *The Mercy Law:* In his quest to end the security crisis, President Liamine Zeroual began the peaceful solutions by suggesting the

[61] Mhend Berkouk, Algerian Strategy for Counter-Terrorism, the Algerian Encyclopaedia for Political and Strategic Studies, 07/11/2018, see link: https://bit.ly/2kXCXKF.

[62] Bouhania Qawi, Algeria and the new Security Suspicions in the African Sahel: Threats of Cloning Daesh in the crisis Sahel, Doha, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, 11/12/2014, p. 04.

[63] Giacomo Percy Pauli and Jacopo Bellasio, Against the Rising Tide: an overview of the growing Criminalization in the Mediterranean basin, Rand, 2017, p. 33.

Mercy Law issued on February 25 1995. It entailed a series of measures that allowed those wanted for various acts of terrorism to surrender and lay down their weapons and to benefit from the amnesty and sentence reduction to enable them to get reintegrated to the society. Analysts posit that this law is based on a security approach that was dominant.[64] At the end its solutions were thinner to present a solution.

b. *The Civil Harmony Law*: On 13 July 1999, the Civil Harmony Law was passed to establish certain special measures in order to provide an appropriate solution to the crisis. Thus, persons involved in terrorism and sabotage and who express their real intention to consciously cease their criminal activities, the law gives them the opportunity to realise this ambition to reintegrate the society.[65] There are many similar common points between the mercy law and the civil harmony, since both of them came to suggest a peaceful way for the armed groups to put down weapons and stop criminal activities. Nevertheless, if the first had come as a presidential order, the second instead came as a law promulgated through the parliament. The Civil Harmony Law therefore had the legal foundation of legitimacy as it went through a public referendum which gave it the power of the popular will. In the end, it had credibility and so needed social support. The implementation of this law lasted from July 1999 to January 2000 and encouraged thousands of Jihadists to stop their criminal activities, put down arms and return to their normal lives.[66]

c. *The Law of National Reconciliation:* The experience of the civil law encouraged the political authorities to continue to pursue the peaceful approach in order to treat the security crisis. Consequently, the national reconciliation law came to catch up with the shortcomings of the civil harmony law and proposed a larger approach to view the problem. Thus, the case of the missing persons was treated and financial compensation was allocated to their families. Moreover,

[64] Tahar Saoud, The National Reconciliation in Algeria, the Experience and the Gains, Arab Politics Magazine, issue 34, September 2018, p. 47.

[65] Code no. 08-99, National Gazette for the Algerian Republic, issue no. 46, 29 Rabi'e Al Awal, 1420; 13/07/ 1999, p. 3.

[66] Tahar Saoud, ibid., pp. 47–48.

families of terrorists were taken in charge, and a chance for a professional reintegration was planned and a legal immunity was declared to prohibit any potential judicial prosecution against members of defence and security forces while preventive measures were taken to prevent any return of the national tragedy.[67]

The Structural Measures

Algeria has prohibited the use of mosques in preaching any message of intolerance and only legally appointed Imams, who are assisted and monitored by religious offices in every district, and which are attached to the Ministry of Religious Affairs are permitted to preach.[68] Meanwhile, the government decreed a range of investment significant initiatives towards the youth, which had resulted in bank credits eased by organisations such as the National Agency for Management of Microcredit known locally as L'Agence Nationale de Gestion du Micro-credit (ANGEM) and the National Youth Employment Support Agency known locally as Agence Nationale de Soutien à L'Emploi (ANSEJ), which were dedicated to help and assist young people to start small enterprises. This strategy contributed to lessen the rate of unemployment and reduced the influence of the Jihadist narratives over the youth.

In addition to that, legal and institutional reforms were performed and covered more significant fields. This included the decision to lift the State of Emergency, the abolition of the special courts, a program training and education classes in prison, the enhancement of the media's role, the promotion of culture as an instrument to fight against fanatic ideas, exclusion and all sorts of violent extremism.[69]

[67] Ibid., pp. 49–50.

[68] Algeria, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, response to Terrorism, The Law Library of Congress, September 2015, p. 16.

[69] De-radicalization policy report, Minister of Maghreb affairs, the African Union and the Arab countries league, the Republic of Algeria, September 2015, at http://www.mf-ctrf.gov.dz/presse/derad-fr.pdf.

Externally

There have been numerous efforts that Algeria has undertaken to confront the terrorism and Islamist groups abroad through the following main steps:

a. Serious diplomatic efforts were made to break the isolation that the putsch of 1991 had imposed upon Algeria, and to mobilise the international public opinion to condemn terrorist acts. Its major achievement in this way is the unprecedented success in urging the international community to criminalise the payment of ransom to terrorists to free hostages, which is considered as a key financing manna for these groups. In July 2009, and in the regular session of the African union held in the city of Sirte in Libya, Algeria could gain the support of the African countries to propose the criminalisation of the payment of ransom.[70] It also played a key role at the international level for the adoption of Resolution 1904 of December 17 2009 by the UN Security Council which criminalised the payment of ransoms for the release of hostages.[71]
b. Rejection of the internationalisation of the Algerian crisis as a home matter. This was accompanied with the condemnation of any foreign interference into the region's crises as a factor that may extend the political instability, and create an enabling environment for the armed groups that will find a social incubator due to negative attitudes of external powers. It argued that internationalisation of the Algerian situation could make the security problems a justification for extra continental powers to intervene in order to protect their interests and to plunder the resources of these communities.
c. To encourage peaceful solutions for regional crises by using mediation especially in the case of Mali and Libya, and urge all parties to abandon violence and to attend negotiations many of which were hosted by Algeria.

[70] Algeria, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, response to Terrorism, The law library of congress, September 2015, p. 9.

[71] Boumedienne Arbi & Fawzeya Qasi, the Algerian Security Approach in the African Sahel: Activating the Principle of "Humanitarian Diplomacy", issue no. 456, February 2017, p. 138.

Conclusion

Algeria has indeed crossed long distances during these years combating terrorism and countering violent extremism from which it gained an experience that the whole world is interested in. The Algerian Government also made some mistakes by prioritising the security solutions before it turned back to consider the political and economic dimensions. This was later remedied by the combination of different mechanisms, including coordination strategy with the neighbouring countries and international powers due to the complexity of the phenomenon, which required a combination of both internal and external efforts.

The Algerian success in this particular field does not mean that the terrorism phenomenon is completely over. Rather, it remains dependent on comprehensive reforms and policies based on rationality that do not provide opportunities for terrorism to emerge, and if the complete eradication of terrorism is impossible, at least it can be reduced to a stage where it can be of no harm for the societies or states. If these perceptions are internally applicable, externally things are difficult, due to the fact that the making and implementation of policies depend more on other sovereign countries. Thus, the instability in neighbouring countries will remain the most important factor of extremism in the region, the main challenges coming from Libya, Mali, and Tunisia into a lesser extent, which in recent times seems to be in a lot better security control situation.

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CHAPTER 14

Terrorist Threats and Dynamics in Egypt

Miriam Shafik

Introduction

Egypt has an estimated population of about 106 million. Approximately 90% are Muslims (majority are Sunni), and 10% are Christians (majority are Coptic Orthodox).[1] Egypt's geographical location makes it a strategic player in the Middle East and the world. It is located in the Northeast of Africa, making it the door for the North African region, while it is connected to Europe through the Mediterranean. Located in the North-eastern side of Egypt, the Suez Canal enables Egypt to play a critical role in the global trade movement. Although not heavily populated, the Sinai Peninsula on the Northeast side holds a strategic border with Jordan and Israel.

Egypt's significance comes from its strategic location and the country is considered a religious symbol for many religions, including Islam. Since

[1] Central Intelligence Agency, "Egypt" The World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/ (accessed 2May 2023).

M. Shafik (✉)
Valletta, Malta
e-mail: miriam.shafik85@gmail.com

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the Islamic conquest of Egypt (Al-Fatih al Islami) in 641 AD, Egypt was governed by Islamic rulers and was even the capital of Islamic Caliphate (al Khilafa al Islamiya) during the Fatimi state (Al Dawla al Fatimiya). After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 and the establishment of a secular rule in Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Ataturk, religious scholars, especially the fundamentalists in the Arab world, were shocked and concerned.[2] To the Muslim world, the Ottoman Empire was an embodiment of the Islamic Sharia-based rule in the modern age, and its fall triggered a sense of threat among Islamic fundamentalists.

The fall of the Ottoman Empire coincided with the spread of the struggle between communism vs imperialism and capitalism. Egypt, a British protectorate, was also exposed to these new ideologies, which many young Egyptians adopted to counter the British occupation and the Egyptian Monarchy. However, Islamic fundamentalists and supporters of the Ottoman Empire saw this as human-made western ideologies adding another layer of threat to God-made governance principles and might deviate the Muslims from their Islamic values. It is essential to understand this historical background when analysing and learning about the rise of Islamic extremism in Egypt.

Background to Terrorism and Extremism in Egypt

The incidences of terrorism and violent extremism in Egypt have a long history as it did not emerge in a vacuum. The history of the Islamic Movements goes back to the 1920s, where Hassan Al-Banna, a primary school teacher, rooted the first seed of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Along decades of political struggle, other radical Islamic movements, and their affiliates were birthed from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood. In some cases, members of these groups were not directly members of MB, but their ideologies stemmed from the teachings of major MB figures, like Sayyid Qutb and Hassan Al-Banna. In the evolution of the Islamic movements in Egypt, some managed to safeguard their identities and others just merged with bigger, more advanced international terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State (IS).

[2] Al Banna, Hassan; "Mozakerat al Da'wa well Da'ya" (Al Banna's Memoires); 2012; pp. 55–56 (Al Banna, 2012).

The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood is a transnational Sunni Islamist movement that seeks to implement Sharia (Islamic law) under a global caliphate. Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Brotherhood is the country's oldest Islamist organisation and has branches worldwide. While these branches operate under various names and use various social, political, and occasionally violent methods, they share a commitment to the overarching goal of establishing Sharia rule. The most notable and lethal Brotherhood offshoot is HAMAS, the Palestinian terror group operating out of the Gaza Strip. Some analysts also argue that the Brotherhood has served as the ideological forerunner of modern violent Islamist groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. The group has been labelled a terrorist organisation by Bahrain, Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates.[3]

In 1926, Hassan Al-Banna (1906–1948), an Islamic fundamentalist school teacher, founded the Muslim Brotherhood Association (Jami'yat al Ikhwan al Muslimeen or MB). Al Banna's objectives included liberating Islamic countries from foreign occupation, resisting the so-called materialist and atheist wave that dominated Muslim societies, and reformulating the political, social, economic, educational, and judiciary systems on Islamic principles.[4] Al-Banna's sense of reform was triggered when he moved to Cairo in the 1920s, and saw the modern urban lifestyle that was drastically different and stronger than in the rural areas where he resided. Al-Banna targeted young adults from low and lower-middle-class societies, engaging with them in coffee shops and mosques in rural and suburban areas of Cairo. He soon gained acceptance and popularity, as he cunningly used the narrative of independence from the British occupation and establishing an Arab-Islamic state and the social grievances between the upper and lower classes. Al-Banna focused on spreading the Da'wa through preaching and charity efforts. Alongside the social welfare and political movement, the MB operated a violent underground group known as "the Secret Apparatus" (Al Tanzim el Khas), dedicated to eradicating the British occupation in Egypt and Jews in Palestine.[5]

[3] See https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/muslim-brotherhood.

[4] Al-Banna, Hassan; "Majmou't Rass'il"; 1 January 1984, p. 168 - 169.

[5] Frampton, Martyn; "The Muslim Brotherhood and the West"; The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018; p.69.

The growth of MB in Egypt inspired other affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant by disseminating Sayyid Qutb's publications, a leading figure in the MB ideologues in the 50s and 60s and the founder of "the Takfiri" ideology. Qutb's writings helped inform the Islamist ideology known as Qutbism, which advocates violent jihad—and the killing of secular Muslims—to implement Sharia.[6] As mentioned by Zachary Laub of the Council on Foreign Relations: Qutb's writings "provided the intellectual and theological underpinnings for many militant Sunni Islamist groups, including al-Qaeda and HAMAS."[7]

Over the last 80 years, the Brotherhood survived several waves of repression, including the legal prohibition of the group, imprisonment, and execution of leading figures. Sayyid Qutb, for example, was executed in 1966 after being accused of organising an assassination attempt targeting the former Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser. However, the relation between the Government and the Brotherhood improved during the 70s when former Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat assumed power following Nasser's death. The Sadat administration sought a peace deal with the Brotherhood on the conditions to revoke violence and publicly acknowledge the administration's legitimacy as an Islamic rule. In return, the Government would release imprisoned members of the Brotherhood and continue their peaceful religious Da'wa in universities and professional unions, legitimising their organisation.[8] However, it was a short-lived period, as the MB disagreed with Sadat's foreign policy regarding the Peace Treaty with Israel after the victory in the Sinai war in 1973. During the Mubarak regime, the Brotherhood continued its political, religious, and social efforts, building up organisational strength unmatched by any other Egyptian opposition. Their political power became evident during the 2005 Parliamentary elections, winning 88 seats out of 508 electoral seats and ten appointees.

As the Arab Spring came to a head in 2011, the Brotherhood's resilience and robust infrastructure left it well placed to capitalise on shifting political landscapes in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa. Several Brotherhood chapters formed political parties

[6] See https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/muslim-brotherhood.

[7] Laub, Zachary; "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood"; Council on Foreign Relations; 15 January 2014, http://www.cfr.org/egypt/egypts-muslim-brotherhood/p23991.

[8] Ashmawi, Hassan, "the Secret History of the Muslim Brotherhood", p. 280-282.

and performed well in their respective countries' elections, particularly in Egypt with the Freedom and Justice Party, which ran senior Brotherhood official Mohammed Morsi as its presidential candidate.[9] During his presidency (June 2012 – July 2013), Morsi's Government alienated much of the population—due to the perceptions of its poor governance and extreme Islamisation of political and social life in Egypt—most notably, rushing to change the constitution. Following months of mass protests calling for early presidential and parliamentary elections, in July 2013, an interim government led by the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court of Egypt, Adly Mansour, replaced Morsi's administration.

After winning the presidential election in 2015, General Al-Sisi declared his internal political agenda would focus on uprooting jihadi movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood entirely, starting by designating it, among many other groups, as a terrorist organisation in Egypt.[10] Additionally, the Egyptian authorities arrested the Brotherhood's acting General Guide, Mahmoud Ezzat.[11] Ezzat had been the group's acting general guide since the 2013 arrest of Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie.[12] Following Ezzat's arrest, the Brotherhood named Ibrahim Mounir its new acting General Guide and reorganised its leadership structure. The Brotherhood has reportedly rallied behind Mounir.[13] Following the crackdown on the Brotherhood, several leaders and members have fled Egypt requesting asylum in Turkey and Qatar.

[9] "Muslim Brotherhood-backed candidate Morsi wins Egyptian presidential election," Fox News, 24 June 2012, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/06/24/egypt-braces-for-announcement-president/.

[10] Louisa Loveluck, "Sisi says Muslim Brotherhood will not exist under his reign," *Guardian* (London), 5 May 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/06/abdel-fatah-al-sisi-muslim-brotherhood-egypt.

[11] Acting leader of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood arrested in Cairo," Reuters, 28 August 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-politics/acting-leader-of-egypts-muslim-brotherhood-arrested-in-cairo-idUSKBN25O1C3.

[12] "Egypt's Brotherhood Names New Acting Supreme Guide," Ahram Online, 20 August 2013, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/79499/Egypt/0/Egypts-Brotherhood-names-new-acting-supreme-guide.aspx.

[13] "Egypt Muslim Brotherhood align with a new acting supreme guide," Middle East Monitor, 17 September 2020, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200917-egypt-muslim-brotherhood-align-with-new-acting-supreme-guide/.

Organisational Structure and Recruitment Process

The MB is known to have the most sophisticated organisational structure among Islamist extremist organisations. Al-Banna himself founded the structure based on enduring resistance which was also targeted at overcoming infiltration from the enemy. He and Ahmed Al Sukkari, his lifelong friend, and other members founded the MB as a religious and charity organisation. Under this umbrella, he created a curriculum for Islamic preaching and guidance on Islamic Fiqh. Also, he established a weekly publication titled "Al-Fatih", which gathered many Islamic scholarly articles from the most famous and conservative Islamic Scholars from Al-Azhar. As the organisation started growing, he founded the Guidance Bureau (Maktab al Irshad) to design and oversee the overall strategy of al Jama'a, which he headed as the General Guide (al Murshid al A'am).

Later in 1940, the MB started taking a more militant approach, where Al-Banna started by forming scout groups for young adults and adult battalions. This wing of the MB developed to be the Secret Apparatus of the organisation and would execute violent attacks against politicians, government agencies, and British soldiers. When Al-Banna formed the Secret Apparatus, he intended it to be a secret wing led by different leadership known to him and a very select few members. In many instances, members of the SA themselves did not know they were part of the MB or a secret militia.

To understand the structure, one must also know about the recruitment process, in which individuals go through a multi-layered vetting process before becoming an inner member of al Jama'a. Historically, the MB outlined four levels of membership[14]:

a. The assistant member (musa'id), a position that is open to any individual from the public interested in joining the MB. The member would sign a membership card and would pay membership dues.
b. The associate member (muntasib), the second level a member can achieve, if attended regular meetings, mastered the principle of al Jama'a and shows complete obedience to the leadership. The mountain should be older than fifteen, received three recommendations

[14] Al-Anani, Khalil; "Inside the Muslim Brotherhood" (Religion, Identity, and Politics); Oxford University Press 2016; p. 103.

from older members, and have his membership approved by the Guidance Bureau (Maktab al Irshad).

c. The active member (al 'amil), the third level of membership, can be reached when thoroughly indoctrinated and received physical and military training. Al 'amil has to pledge allegiance (baya) to the General Guide on total obedience (al sam'a we al ta'aa) using the Quran and a gun. Members of this level conduct the same duties as the first two and execute specific missions.
d. The Mujahid, the fourth and highest level of membership, is only available to those selected by the Guidance Bureau. Members of this level follow a stricter protocol and must sacrifice time, wealth, and life for al Ja'maa.

However, this membership process changed several times due to infiltration from the Egyptian Government and a change in the MB's leadership. For example, after the assassination of Al-Banna in 1948, the membership levels were reduced to only two levels: a) "under probation" and "active member". Since the 1970s, the structure changed again to include five levels, and they are muhib (sympathiser), mu'ayyid (supporter), mountain (associate), muntazim (regular), and 'amil (active or operating). The different membership levels vary in the level of commitment and involvement of the member to the organisation.

As an organisation born in the shadows and survived several repressions from the different ruling regimes, the MB keeps a tight-knit structure divided into two axes. The vertical axis provides a pyramid hierarchy of seven administrative levels: usra (family or cell), shu'ba (division or branch), mantiqa (district), maktab idari (administrative office), Majlis al-Shura (the Shura/Advisory Council), Maktab al Irshad (the Guidance Bureau), and al murshid al 'am (the General Guide)[15] (Fig. 14.1).

The horizontal axis is considered the operative arm of the organisation. It consists of three main components: aqsam (sections), lijan (committees), and wahdat (units)[16] (Fig. 14.2).

[15] Ibid.; p. 104.

[16] Mitchell, the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood, p. 107; also Al-Anani, Khalil; "Inside the Muslim Brotherhood" (Religion, Identity, and Politics); Oxford University Press 2016; p. 103.

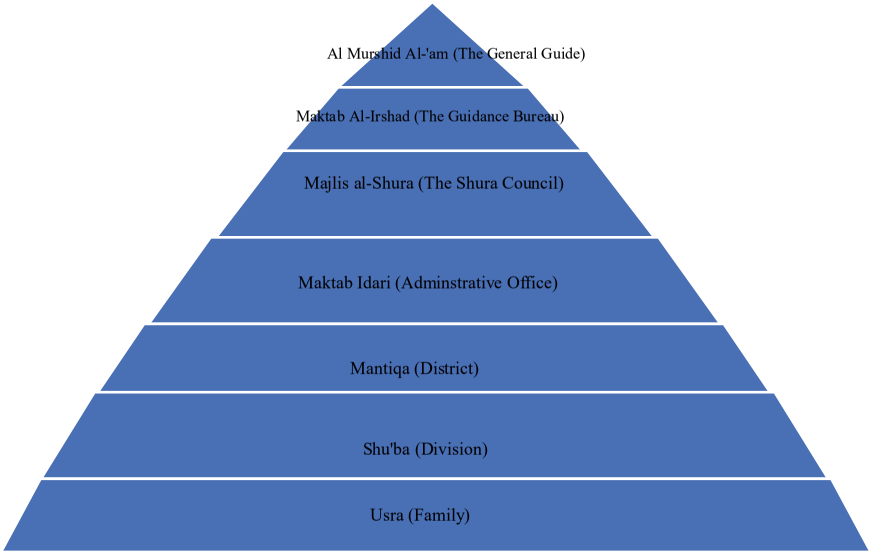

Fig. 14.1 The vertical structure of the brotherhood (*Source* Al-Anani, Khalil, *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood*, [2016])

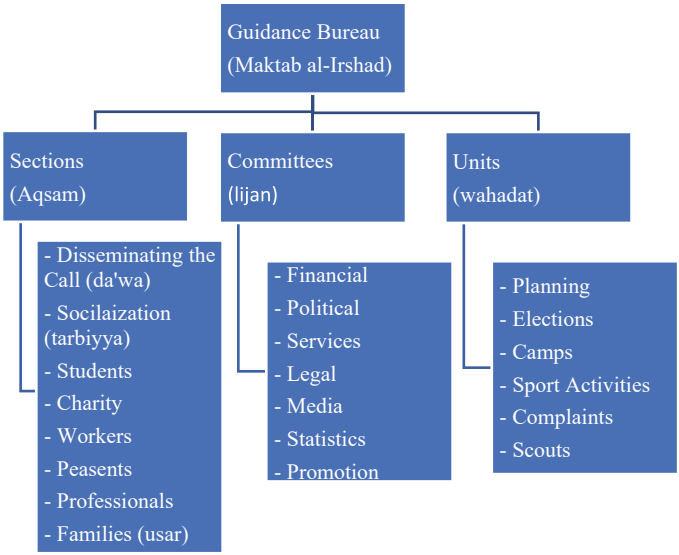

Fig. 14.2 The Horizontal structure of the brotherhood (*Source* Al-Anani, Khalil; *Inside the Muslim Brotherhood* [2016][17])

Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) and Al-Qaeda

Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), also called *al-Jihad*, an Egyptian extremist organisation that originated in the late 1970s and developed into a powerful force in the 1980s and 1990s. EIJ allied with the Al-Qaeda network in the late 1990s, and the two groups merged in 2001.[18] It is not clear how and when precisely the EIJ was formed, as most jihadi groups started and remained, for a while, as underground cells. Therefore, no formal records documented its history. In his book "the Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide", Abdul Moneim's Muneeb, a former member of EIJ, recounts the history of Islamic movements in Egypt, including the EIJ, according to his own experience and based on testimonies of fellow members of the movement. Theories varied about the formation and

[17] Al-Anani, Khalil; "Inside the Muslim Brotherhood" (Religion, Identity, and Politics); Oxford University Press 2016; p. 104.

[18] Pearson, Erica. "Egyptian Islamic Jihad". Encyclopedia Britannica, 26 February 2020, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Egyptian-Islamic-Jihad.

relation to the Muslim Brotherhood following their release from prisons in the 70s. This theory was never proved. Most EIJ founding members denied it.

The first jihadi group was established in 1966 in Cairo, mainly by three high school students, E'lwi Mostafa (from Misr El Gedida, Cairo), Ismail Tantawi (from Al Manyal, Cairo), and Nabil Al Bur'ei (from Al Maadi, Cairo).[19] The group became an apparatus, including several other groups from Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, and other governorates in Egypt.[20] Members were all college or high school students who started their journey of radicalisation and grew with the organisation over the years.[21]

By the end of the 1960s, the famous Ayman Al Zawahiri (current Emir of Al-Qaeda) joined the organisation along with some of his colleagues, including Yehya Hashem (Public Prosecutor), Refa'ai Suroor (a Qutbi and Salafi author) and, Essam Al Qomri (military officer), Mohamed Ismail Al Mukadam (a physician), who later on co-founded and led the Alexandria Jihadi Salafi group.

Inspired by Sayyid Qutb's takfiri doctrine, the group adopted an extremist Salafi ideology in its Da'wah (proselytization of Islam), calling for changing the ruling system to an Islamic Khilafa as modelled by Prophet Mohammed in the early Islamic age. Influenced by military coups in the region and Guerilla Movements worldwide, the group believed in violence to enact political, social and economic changes.[22] Additionally, Qutb's execution in 1966 and the Muslim Brotherhood's hesitation in executing a coup against Abdul Nasser enhanced the group's conviction of the use of violence as the only solution to achieve change.

The priority on the organisation's agenda was to overthrow Anwar Al Sadat's regime. Their strategy was to infiltrate the military by either recruiting law enforcement students or sending loyal young members to join the military Academy.[23] The group used Qutb's publication like "In the shadows of Qur'an'' (Fi Zelal al Qur'an) and "Milestones'' (Ma'alim

[19] Muneeb, Abdul Moneim; "the Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide", p. 72; Madbouly Library 2010; Misr Al Gedida, Al Manyal and Al Maadi are famous neighbourhoods in Cairo.

[20] Muneeb, Abdul Moneim; "the Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide", p. 74; Madbouly Library 2010;

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

fi al Tariq) as the primary curriculum for radicalising and recruiting its members. Since most members were from the military, they had unlimited and legitimate access to weapons and combat training, which helped to hasten the progress of their plans.

Conflicts in Al-Jihad Movement

Between 1966 and 1981, the al-Jihad organisation passed through several conflicts among its members, causing divisions among its lines. The most memorable ones considered very impactful on the groups' operations and organisational structure are highlighted below.

Yehia Hashem Offshoot of Al-Jihad

Due to Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war against Israel, the Egyptian public, mainly college students, protested in the streets against President Abdel Nasser's administration, blaming it for the defeat and calling for his abdication. Yehia Hashem, who was in the Cairo jihadi group, saw this as a strategic opportunity to raise a public and military coup against Abdel Nasser. However, like Ismail Tantawi and Elwi Mostafa, several other leaders disagreed on Hashem's timing and strategy, pointing out a rushed and underdeveloped plan threatening the group's exposure.

Hashem, along with some group members, led the public in the protests and got arrested and released after the police learned he is a public prosecutor. Additionally, due to other ideological differences with the group, Hashem formed a new group with his supporters, which was defeated in an armed struggle with the law enforcement in 1975, leading to Hashem's death and the arrest of remaining members.[24]

Mustafa Elwi's Divison

Following the Egyptian-Israeli war in 1973, members debated the Islamization of military officers who fought in the war (as they have fought under the flag of a tyrant administration). Members like Mustafa Elwi and his supporters advocated for the military officers' favour and considered them martyrs mainly that his brother was one of the officers.

[24] Muneeb, Abdul Moneim; "the Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide", p. 81; Madbouly Library 2010;

Ismail Tantawi, the Emir at the time, tried to negotiate for a middle ground among both sides of the dispute. As a result, Mustafa Elwi established an offshoot from the group with his loyal supporters, most famously Essam Al Qmri, Nabil Bura'i, Ayman Al Zawahri and Sayyid Imam Alsharif.[25]

Saleh Sariya Division (The Military Technical Academy Organisation)

Saleh Sariya was a Palestinian, holder of an Iraqi passport and a prominent staff member in the League of Arab States. He was known for his extremist beliefs despite his non-specific affiliation to a group. In some recounts, Sariya is known to be affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, under Hassan Alhudaibi, the second General Guide of the MB. Sariya advocated for a military coup, and according to Ali Ashmawi, one of the leaders of the MB Special Apparatus, he tried to join the SA and take its lead to organise a military coup against Abdel Nasser's administration in the 1960s. However, he was unable to join the SA formation due to differences in strategies with Ali Ashmawi.[26] Others recall him as a member of the EIJ, joining the Hashem-Tantawi conflict, but it was never established where his absolute allegiance lay.[27] Sariya did not agree with both leaders, as with the first, he disagreed on the principle of using Guerilla movements, and with the second he disagreed with his extreme Salafi ideology, which was not his core Islamic doctrine. As a result, Saraya formed his jihadi group, which included many separatists of all three groups and located in different governorates in Egypt. Its most famous members were: Ahmed Saleh (Port Said), Karem Alanadoli, Mostafa Yusri, Hassan Alhellawi (Giza), Talal Alansari, Khalid Alminshawi, Ali Maghrebi, Hassan Alsaheimi (Alexandria), Mohamed Shakir Alsharif (Qina), and others.[28]

The group was later known as "the Military Technical Academy Organisation", due to its famously failed coup against Al Sadat's administration in 1974. Among the organisation's formation, there were two wings

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ashmawi, Ali; "the Secret History of the Muslim Brotherhood",

[27] Muneeb, Abdul Moneim; "The Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide", 83; Madbouly Library 2010;

[28] "The Military Technical Academy Organisation (Tanzim Al Faneya Al Askariya)"; https://www.islamist-movements.com/2302; 6 February 2014.

established as the militia wing of the group, one included military officers and was known as such, and the other included students from military academies and the most significant number came from the Military Technical Academy.[29]

As Sadat's strategy after the victory of 1973 showed his interest in allying with the U.S. and broke Egypt's alliance with the Soviet Union, many radical Islamists saw this as a threat to takfiri groups and labelled him an "unbeliever" who should be removed from power. This motivated Saraya and his supporters to execute their coup, which was to invade the Military Technical Academy with the help of the group's insiders to open the gates for the remaining members of the group to seize firearms and the armoured cruisers in the Academy. After that, the group would march to the Central Committee of the Socialist Union Headquarters, where President Al-Sadat would meet with the public leadership to discuss the "October Paper."[30] Subsequently, they would detain the leadership, including the President, to forcefully abdicate him and seize power declaring Sariya, the new president of Egypt.[31]

However, as soon as the plan started, some members, notably Ahmed Alrajal and Jalal Shafik, were surprised by the group's violence to enforce the plan and fled the group at hour zero. Alrajal went to the Presidential Palace, asking to meet the President to report on the coup and was referred to the State Security. Also, Shafik notified the State Security of the coup, which in turn notified the Military Intelligence, as the Military Academy is under its jurisdiction.[32]

Despite the information both reported, the MTA group was able to invade the Academy and engaged in armed struggle with its officers, causing the death of six and injuring 27. However, the security forces subdued the struggle and arrested all the involved members in the scene and the leadership, including Saleh Sariya, Talal Alansari, Karem Alanadoli, and Hassan Allawi. While Sariya, Alanadoli, and Alansari were

[29] Stated by Talal Alansari, leader of the Alexandria Group in the MTA Organisation, in "The Military Technical Academy Organisation" in "The Political Crime TV Show", Al Jazeera, 2009.

[30] The "October Paper" was Egypt's national strategy for political, economic, and social development in the post-Egypt-Israeli war.

[31] Saleh Saraya Confessions; Public Prosecution Archives, p. 518.

[32] Stated by Fouad Alaam, Former Head of State Security in "The Military Technical Organisation Documentary", in "the Political Crime"; by Al Jazeera, 2009.

sentenced to death, only Sariya and Alanadoli were executed. Meanwhile, instead of execution, Talal Alansari's sentence was reduced to 25 years imprisonment with hard labour due to his father's connection with President Al-Sadat.[33]

After the MTA operation, the government kept al-Jihad under tight control and even exercised several arrests' campaigns on the foremost leaders. In 1979, Mostafa Yousri, the Emir, dissolved the organisation. However, the group's dissolution did not prevent middle-level leaders, including Ayman Al Zawahiri, Essam Al Qmri, Ismail Tantawi, Karam Zohdi, and Mohamed Abdul Salam Farag from forming their own jihadist cells. Each leader would polarise sympathisers from a specific geographical area, usually where he lived, and announce himself the Emir of this area. For example, in Cairo, Ayman Al Zawahiri, Essam Al Qmri and Sayyid Imam Alsharif, along with Ismail Tantawi, formed the largest group in Cairo, with Tantawi being the Emir. This formation continued as a sleeping cell until the assassination of President Al-Sadat in 1981, where the government exposed them for their involvement in the assassination.

Mohamed Abdulsalam Farag—A Milestone in Al-Jihad Movement

After the failed operation of the MTA and the dissolution of the Jihad in 1979, Mohamed Abdulsalam Farag started advocating for uniting the small cells into one formation to revive the Qutbist violent jihad concept. His famous book "The Neglected Duty" (Al Farida Al Ghaiba) focused on emphasising the importance of violent Jihad, preaching that it should be considered the sixth pillar of Islam and a necessity for fighting the kafir regime.[34]

Farag succeeded in having a clear and lasting impact that changed the history of EIJ and its future today. His book inspired other middle-level leaders to join forces with his group to continue the unfinished work of the Jihad movement, which is a coup against the Sadat's administration. Al Zawahiri's group in Cairo, Karam Zohdi's Jama'a Islamiya group in Upper Egypt and Ismail Al Moqadam and his Alexandria group (later

[33] Talal Alansari's father was Abdulmoneim Alansari, a famous writer and poet from Alexandria.

[34] Abdelsalam Farag, Mohamed; "the Neglected Duty" (Al Farida Al Ghaiba); published in 1981, pp. 5–6.

known as the Jihadi Salafi Jama'a) were the most famous groups that used Abdulsalam's united front.

Also, he succeeded in recruiting critical members from the Armed Forces to the organisation, including, but not limited to, Aboud Al Zomer, a prominent Lieutenant Colonel in the Military Intelligence Department, First Lieutenant Khalid Al Islamboli (who later shot Al-Sadat), First Lieutenant Atta Tayel, Major Mamdouh Abou Jabal, Colonel Ahmed Al Qurifani, and Captain Ahmed Morsi.[35] Recruiting military officers was one of the most crucial factors in the success of Sadat's assassination. Another critical factor was Al Zawahiri's cell joining, which did not focus on recruiting members as much as it did on building a considerable provision of material and financial support like cash, firearms, and houses to support the different movements.

Due to the different facets of the organisation coming from different backgrounds, the united front soon was disturbed by disputes on ideological ideas and shari'a judgement, mainly between the Abdulsalam's group and the Jama'a Islamiya group. Considering his Islamic education, both parties agreed to announce Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, also known as "the Blind Sheikh", as the "Mufi" or Islamic judge to guide the group's judgement. Abdul Rahman was a Schoolteacher, studied Sharia and Fiqh (jurisprudence) at Al Azhar University.

Muslim Brotherhood Assassination of President Anwar Al-Sadat

President Anwar al-Sadat won the Nobel Peace Prize after signing the 1979 Camp David peace treaty with Israel. However, the treaty caused dissent among the radical Islamic movements in Egypt. To control the opposition from the extremist groups, on 5 September 1981, Al-Sadat issued—what is known as "the Reservation Order" otherwise referred as the "September's Black Resolutions"—an executive order to arrest all the leaders of opposition parties and Islamist movements. Concerned about the order to be the beginning of a mass arrests campaign similar to the MB arrests in 1965, the EIJ organised an assassination operation targeting Al-Sadat. The plan included a coup by al Jama'a Islamiya in Upper Egypt.

[35] Moneeb, Abdulmoneim; "The Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide"; Madbouly Library 2010; p. 88.

It would seize control over Security Directorates Headquarters in each governorate, starting from Assiut to Cairo, where they will occupy the Radio and TV Headquarters to announce the group's leadership.

On 6 October 1981, Khalid Islambouly, Atta Tayel, Mamdouh Abou Jabal, and Hussain Abbas, a Sniper and shooting instructor in the Armed Forces, assassinated President Sadat during the national celebration of 6 October victory on live television. However, the planned coup in Assiut failed due to the intervention of the military to subdue it. The perpetrators were prosecuted for two different cases, the assassination of Al-Sadat and their affiliation and membership in a terrorist organisation aiming to overthrow the regime. The second case was known as "the Great Al-Jihad Case of 1981". The mastermind of the operation, Aboud Al Zomer, was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment for planning and leading the Assassination. His fellow, Essam Al Qmri, was only sentenced to 10-year imprisonment in the first case. For providing material support and joining al-Jihad, Ayman Al Zawahri and many others were sentenced to three-year imprisonment. Mohamed Abdulsalam Farag, as leader of al-Jihad, was sentenced to death and executed in 1982. Omar Abdul Rahman was charged with releasing the fatwa (edict) that justifies the assassination but found innocent and was released in 1984.[36]

In Prison

During their time in prison, the leaders of Al-Jihad continued progressing their plans. Despite being detained in a military prison, Al Zomr and Al Qmri organised an escape plan and a coup to overthrow the Mubarak regime at the time. This first attempt failed. Upon moving to the political prison, both tried to regroup Al-Jihad and Al Jama'a Al Islamiya again under their leadership, using the trial in Al-Jihad Case as an excuse for establishing a united front.[37] The idea was appealing to the prisoners, and they established a Shura Council, consisting of 12 members, including Ayman Al Zawahiri, Tariq Al Zomer, Nageh Ibrahim, and Essam Derbala. The Chair of the Shura Council was held by Aboud Al Zomr for a long

[36] Ibid.

[37] Moneeb, Abdulmoneim; "The Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide"; Madbouly Library 2010; p. 99.

time before he was succeeded by Essam Al Qmri, but the group asked Al Zomer to return.

Once again, conflicts arose between members of al-Jihad and Al Jama'a, mainly on who should hold the leadership of the EIJ. Additionally, leading figures in al-Jihad like Al Qmri, Al Zomer, Al Zawahiri considered themselves more experienced and senior in the Islamist movements. At the same time, al Jama'a members were seen as a group of college students who still lacked experience and guidance. For this specific notion, al-Jama'a chose Omar Abdul Rahman, was utterly loyal to the group, to be their Emir. Having Omar Abdul Rahman as the public face for al Jama'a gave it legitimacy and public profile of an established organisation gaining support and respect from other movements, including the MB.

However, the conflicts persisted where Al Zomer protested against the rule of Omar Abdul Rahman due to his blindness. The debate was titled "the reign of the captive vs the reign of the blind". According to Sharia law, an Islamic ruler should be in total physical and mental capacity to rule. In addition, he should be a free individual. On the other hand, the al-Jihad group chose Aboud Al Zomr to be its Emir, who was imprisoned at the time. Hence, it does not satisfy the condition of being a free individual. As a result of this conflict, both movements separated, and after their release from prison, members were divided into three main groups: the first, known today, as al Jama'a al Islamiya (JI), will be talked about in the next section. The second was a group led by Aboud Al Zomr and other supporters, and the third was Al Zawahiri's group.

The Formation of Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Al-Qaeda

In 1988, the Aboud Al Zomer group merged with Ayman Al Zawahiri's, establishing the EIJ. The leadership of the EIJ consisted of twelve members, including Ayman Al Zawahiri and Mohamed Al Zawahiri, Ahmed Salama, Maj. Abdul Aziz Algamal and others, based in Peshawar, Pakistan. The new formation was led by Sayyid Imam Al-Sharif. In 1991, Aboud and Tariq Al Zomer and several Al-Jihad members left the group and joined the JI in prison. In Peshawar, Al Zawahiri and Sayyid Imam

Al-Sharif became acquainted with Osama Bin Laden's Saudi financier.[38] Ties between the leadership of EIJ and Al-Qaeda deepened, where EIJ would rely on Al-Qaeda to finance its violent operations against the Egyptian Government.[39] The EIJ claimed several famous assassination attempts and attacks, notably, the 1995 attack on the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad. However, the EIJ was overshadowed mainly by al Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah, which waged a far bloodier war.[40] In 1998, EIJ and al-Qaeda announced a formal alliance and fully merged in 2001, coordinating and implementing the 11 September 2001 attacks.[41]

Al Jihad's Revisionism (Al Muraj'aat)

In the late 1990s, the divisions among the lines of the EIJ increased. From one side, Sayyid Alsharif adopted far extremist ideas calling government employees apostates and enemies of Islam. Regardless of their role, he considered government employees as aides to the apostate president, enabling him to implement his political agenda. He also purportedly declared the Muslim Brotherhood, an apostate group, for revoking violence and engaging in the regime's political sphere. Many Islamic Scholars in the group disagreed with his extreme radical views. At the same time, the JI started perpetrating bloody attacks on tourists, resulting in arresting most of the JI and some of the EIJ leaders, including Alsharif, who was extradited by the U.S. to Egypt after his arrest in Yemen.[42]

In prison, the Egyptian Government initiated a truce with the JI and EIJ to renounce violence and commit to peaceful Da'wa. In return, the government would release the imprisoned members and allow them to have a role in the political domain. Leaders including Imam Alsharif and Nabil Naeem among others accepted the notion and led the negotiations with the government. Nabil Naeem, the Emir of the JI at the time,

[38] Pearson, Erica. "Egyptian Islamic Jihad". Encyclopedia Britannica, 26 February 2020, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Egyptian-Islamic-Jihad.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Haddad, Hossam, "the Egyptian Jihad…the Organisation Division…the Change of Ideology…and the Many Leaders", 25 November 2020; https://www.islamist-movements.com/2510.

drafted what is called: "the Jihad Rationalization Memorandum", a document focusing on justifying the rationale of renouncing violence based on Islamic jurisprudence and Sharia. The objective of the Memorandum was to promote for the leadership acceptance of the government's efforts and oblige their supporters to follow in their example. To announce his objection and respond to the Memorandum, Al Zawahiri published a book titled "The Acquittance" (Al Tabre'a), where he emphasised the use of violence as the only method of establishing an Islamic State.[43]

Differences Between Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Other Movements

It is essential to know and understand what differentiates the EIJ from other Islamist movements in the scene. All Islamist movements established between the 1960s and 1970s agree on the principle of "takfirism"[44] and the need to establish an Islamic State modelled after the Prophet Muhammed's reign in the early ages of Islam. However, it is the strategy that creates the difference. For the EIJ, they consider focusing on military coups, whether supported by public endorsement or not, the way to achieve the Islamic State. Therefore, their fight was mainly against the ruling regimes of the Arab and Islamic countries, which was evident in the Military Technical Academy coup attempt and Al Sadat's assassination operation. Also, the EIJ disagreed with Al-Qaida's principle of prioritising the fight against the far enemy (i.e. the U.S. and the West) over the near enemy (rulers and leaders of the Arab and Muslim world).

Notably, Al-Qaida, Ayman Al Zawahiri, is the one who changed AQ's strategy to focus on the far enemy, which was apparent in his first AQ attack on 11 September 2001. Although being a former leader of EIJ, Al Zawahiri advocated that fighting the West and their interests worldwide would distract its attention away from the Islamic and Arab countries and would weaken its support to the ruling regimes of the Islamic world (i.e. the near enemy), leaving it vacant for AQ and their affiliates to establish their version of an Islamic State.

[43] Moneeb, Abdulmoneim; "The Egyptian Islamic Movements Guide"; Madbouly Library 2010; p. 99.

[44] "takfirism" is the notion of announcing someone as an unbeliever of religion.

Al Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah (JI)

Similar to the Al-Jihad movement, Al Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah (JI), consisted of college students in the middle of the 1970s at Assiut University in Upper Egypt.[45] The most known founders of JI include Abu Al Ala Madi, Moheyi Eldin Issa, Salah Hashem, Karam Zohdi, Nageh Ibrahim, Refa'ai Taha, and Osama Hafez. After their release from prison, the MB's strategy was to control all the Islamist movements in Universities. In 1978, the MB solicited all Islamist movements to unite their forces under the MBs flagship. Several members agreed, including Abu Al Ala Madi and Moheyi Eldin Issa. The others, however, declined and decided to continue with a separate organisation until 1980, where they partnered with the Al-Jihad movement. For JI, the alliance was necessary, as most movement members did not have any military or combat experience. Unlike the Al-Jihad movement, which was formed by several military members and had the necessary military experience.

Although the JI joined al-Jihad organising and implementing several attacks, including the assassination of President Al-Sadat, their strategy focused on interdiction against the abominable society acting as moral police.[46] The group "the abominable" included gender social intercourse, drinking, music concerts, wedding parties, theatre plays, and movies. For an extended period, the government was lenient in its response to the JI violence, as it considered it harmless to the national security and the political domain.

As the JI's dominance expanded over most of the cities and villages in Upper Egypt, the government started to feel the threat and the marginalisation of its governance in the area. Additionally, between 1986 and 1997, the group carried out a series of violent attacks against law enforcement, public figures and tourists. Most notably, the assassination attempt of President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995 and the Hatshepsut Temple Attack in Luxor killing more than 60 tourists in November 1997. Following the assassination attempt of Hosni Mubarak, senior members of the JI and al-Jihad were arrested and imprisoned. During their time in prison, the Egyptian government, under General Ahmed Raafat (aka

[45] Moneeb, Abdulmoneim; "The Egyptian Islamist Movements Guide"; Madbouly Library 2010; p. 144.

[46] Counter Extremism Project, "Egypt Country Report", https://www.counterextremism.com/node/13524/printable/pdf.

Mostafa Ref'aat), initiated another initiative with the jihadist to renounce the violence in exchange for their release from prison. The initiative was known as the Revisionism of the 90 s. Under the leadership of Omar Abdul Rahman, JI members agreed and started disseminating lectures and pamphlets on their new strategy and criminalising their previous violent attacks.[47]

However, members like Refa'ai Taha protested against the initiative orchestrating the Luxor attack of 1997 as a sign of defiance towards the government.[48] The JI later denounced the attack, and Taha was removed from his position as Chair of the Shura Council of the JI overseas and the Head of the organisation's military wing. He travelled to several countries, including Sudan and Afghanistan, where he built a strong relationship with Al Zawahiri and Bin Laden and was one of the JI members who signed their founding the International Jihadi Front against Jews and Christians.[49] Despite the commitment the JI showed on renouncing violence, Taha continued his involvement in terrorist activities until he died in Syria, on his way to meet leaders of the Al Nusra Front in 2018.[50]

In 2011, the JI changed one of its most arduous policies of avoiding the political domain and formed the Construction and Development political party. The party won 13 seats in the 2011 parliamentary elections, and during Morsi's presidency, a member of the IG, Adel Al-Khayat, was appointed governor of Luxor, a position he resigned from a week later due to public backlash concerning his affiliation with the 1997 Luxor attacks.[51]

[47] Haddad, Hossam; "Refa'ai Taha, the Determination on Terrorism"; 17 November 2020; https://www.islamist-movements.com/5962.

[48] Interview with Ahmed Soltan, Journalist and Researcher specialised in Al-Qaeda and Daesh.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Al Jazeera, "Controversial new Luxor governor, quits—Adel al-Khayat, affiliated with once-banned Islamic group, steps down after days as governor of the ancient city", published on 22 June 2013; https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2013/6/23/controversial-new-luxor-governor-quits.

Haraket Saw'aid Misr

The Haraket Saw'aid Misr (HASM) is an active terrorist group in Egypt. It was formed in 2015 by two Muslim Brotherhood members known as Yahya al-Sayyid Musa and Alaa Ali Al-Samadhi. In the wake of Morsi's ouster in 2013 and the Egyptian government disengagement of protest in Rab'aa square (East Cairo), the MB formed "the High Administrative Committee", a committee to manage the internal crisis.[52] Also, the same council is known to have legitimised armed violence in the MB.

According to Ahmed Soltan, journalist and researcher in Islamist Movements, the MB turn to the violence resulted from social and organisational process, meaning the group changed its strategy to return to violence first, then provided the Sharia justification to its supporters and followers.[53] The legitimation of violence was published in the MB's book "The Jurisprudence of the Public's Resistance to the Coup" and other less known publications, issued by the Legitimate Committee for the Armed Movement.[54]

The MB violence after 2013 took a gradual process. It involved light attacks, sabotaging activities, using light material such as Molotov cocktails, setting fires, and small firearms. It also involved the use of carefully orchestrated attacks perpetrating significant scale events or high-profile political figures. The table in Fig. 14.3 shows the different waves of violence and the gradual change in their strategy.

The HASM's success in violently perpetrating several attacks around Egypt can be attributed to many factors, including gaining security and military experience over the years and receiving military and intelligence support from MB branches overseas (in Qatar and Turkey) and other

[52] Mekameleen TV, Historical Interview with Dr Magdy Shalash, Member of the High Administrative Committee for the Ikhwan and friend of Dr Mohamed Kamal; 7 October 2016; to watch the interview, click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffxvHduo064.

[53] Soltan, Ahmed; "The Organisational Structure and the Operation Mechanism…How does the Inside of Hasm Movement look like?", Early Warning Center, 3 May 2020.

[54] Investigations Records in Case no. 420 for 2017, High State Security Division (known as HASM 2 and Liwa' Al Thawra).

Violence Level	Techniques used	Name of the MB's Armed Movement	Violent Phase (Wave)
Low	Setting fires Use of Molotov Cocktails Use of small firearms	Execution Movement (Harakat E'dam) Molotov Movement (Haraket Molotov) Fire Movement (Harakat Wala'a)	First Wave Mid 2013 – End 2014

Fig. 14.3 Development of the Armed Movement of HASM (*Source* Review on the MB's Armed Movements Data through Social Media Accounts [Twitter, Telegram] and the notebook of the Revolutionary Punishment Movement)

terrorist organisations Qassam Brigades.[55] Additionally, returnees from Al-Qaeda and Daesh joining the MB armed movements and the lucrative financial and material support provided by MB local and overseas branches helped progress their violent operation tremendously.[56]

Organisational Structure and Operational Flow

The organisational structure of HASM was another critical element in the quick spread of its operations in Egypt and limiting the interception of the security forces. Its founding leaders, Mohammed Kamal (killed), Mohamed Saeed Abu Hajer (arrested), Yehya Mussa, Alaa Alsamahi (both based in Turkey), designed it to be a bunch of independent armed cells that are only interconnected through the common name of the movement and its General Command.

The structure of the HASM combines two types of hierarchy. The first is a horizontal hierarchy, divided into five divisions reporting to the General Command of the Armed Movement. Figure 14.4 shows a diagram of the horizontal organisational structure of the movement.

- *Shari'a Committee Division* is responsible for designing and managing the ideological narrative to establish the justification for the violent activities for the members. The committee supervises the work of two units; the *Sharia Founding Unit* and the *Curriculum Unit*. The first is responsible for finding and founding the Sharia principles justifying violence and issued several publications on this matter. The latter focused on preparing the theological curriculum to prepare members for the violent perpetration and suicide operations.
- *Financial Committee Division*, tasked with providing financial support for the operations and providing salaries to the members. Also, it provides financial assistance to families of deceased and imprisoned members.

[55] Several released National Security documents indicate the involvement of the Turkish and Qatari Intelligence in supporting and training members of the MB Armed Movements in Egypt. Many activists of these movements confirmed having training by Turkish Intelligence in Malaysia and Sudan.

[56] Soltan, Ahmed; "The Organisational Structure and the Operation Mechanism…How does the Inside of HASM Movement look like?", Early Warning Center, 3 May 2020.

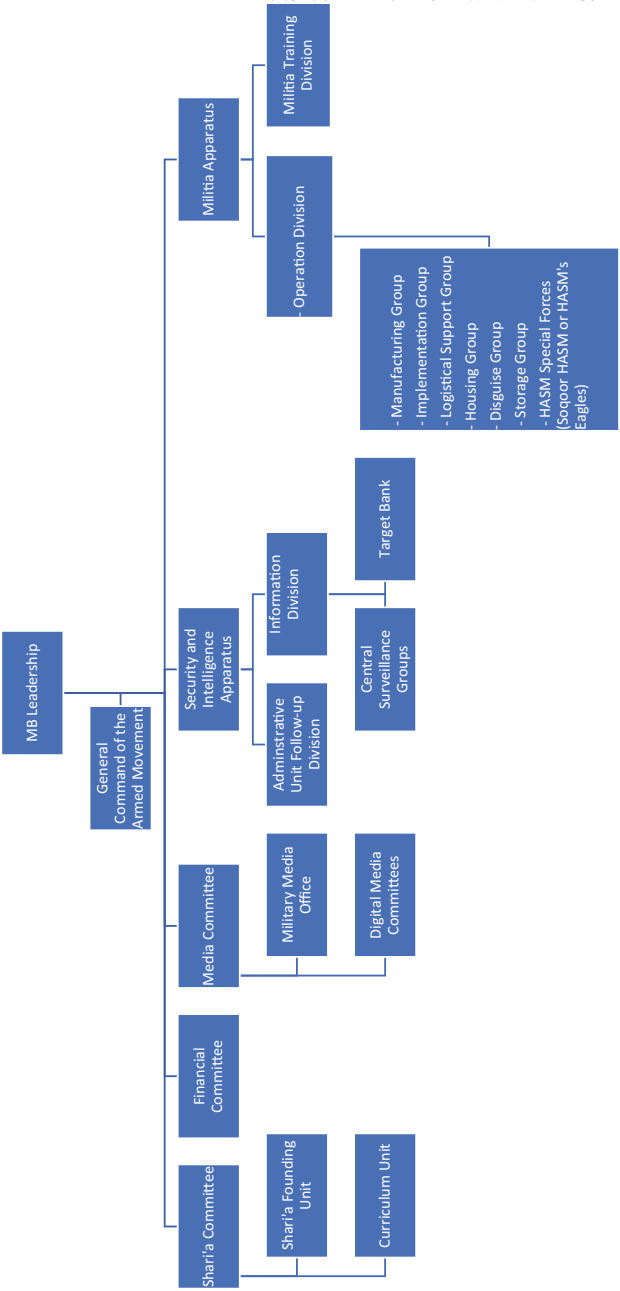

Fig. 14.4 HASM horizontal structure

- *Media Committee Division* is responsible for issuing publications, promoting HASM's ideology and narrative, and managing digital media campaigns on social media platforms and HASM's central platform on Telegram. The committee has two units working under its leadership. The first unit, known as *the* "*Militia Media Office*", works to photograph training camps and terrorist operations to disseminate its propaganda campaigns. The office is known to have issued "Kill Them" (Katelouhum) and "Sound of Bullets" (Aziz al Rosas), which included pictures of HASM's training camps. The second unit focuses on monitoring news channels and social media platforms, producing a weekly report to the General Command.
- *The Security and Intelligence Apparatus*, the fourth division, supervises three sub-units. The first is the *Follow-up Division for the Administrative Departments* responsible for securing data related to the movement members and ensuring their compliance with the safety regulations. This division includes the Archive unit where it keeps information on all members of HASM and informs their families in the case of being arrested, killed, or any other situation. The *Information Division* is the second group divided into two subgroups, the *Central Surveillance Groups* and the *Target Bank*. The Central Surveillance Groups focus on monitoring targets of the terrorist operations. Members are trained on using sophisticated techniques and surveillance equipment. Also, they get special training on cyber and communication surveillance and other methods, like hacking. The Target Bank group collects the monitoring and surveillance reports and submits them to the General Command.
- *The Militia Apparatus* is the largest is composed of several divisions and groups.

    a. *Operation Division* is responsible for implementing terrorist attacks perpetrating significant targets, which the Information Division reports. This division consists of seven groups:
        i. *Manufacturing Group* – manufactures all explosive devices.
        ii. *Implementation Group* – consists of very carefully selected members who obtain high physical and mental skills to perpetrate terrorist attacks.
        iii. *Logistical Support Group* – provides financial and material support for terrorist operations.

iv. *Housing Group* – chooses safe havens for members, hide-outs for weapons and devices used in terrorist operations.
v. *Disguise Group* – trains members of the Apparatus on disguise techniques
vi. Forgery Group – skilled in forging identity documents for Apparatus members to facilitate their movements and transactions.
vii. *Storage Group* – is responsible for storing weapons, explosives and firearms, locations for training camps in coordination with the Militia Training Division.
viii. *HASM Special Forces (aka Soquoor HASM or HASM's Eagles)* – consists of the elite fighters of the Apparatus and is responsible for perpetrating complex and significant terrorist operations, like political figures' or security members' assassinations.

b. *Militia Training Division* is another division under the Militia Apparatus and is responsible for training members on combat strategies and techniques. It also provides high-level physical training. During the training phase, members train to use weapons and explosive devices in all forms. The division trained many in oversea camps, such as Malaysia and Sudan.

To limit the damage of infiltration to their movements, HASM has established the second type of structure based on the geographical locations of members. The geographical distribution consists of four sectors, Central, North, South, and Upper Egypt, each combining groups in different governorates (Fig. 14.5).

The group's formation in each governorate is structured vertically, where under the governorate sector comes three sub-sectors. Each sub-sector supervises the work of two units, which two different supervisors lead. Each unit is divided into three independent lines. Each Line supervisor is responsible for guiding three groups within his domain. Additionally, he is tasked with polarising and recruiting new members from their geographical focus. Groups within each line are divided into four cells. The cells are separated according to functions, including surveillance, logistical support, manufacturing, and implementation/perpetration (Fig. 14.6).

HASM claimed responsibility for several deadly terrorist attacks in Egypt including, the assassination of the Attorney General of Egypt

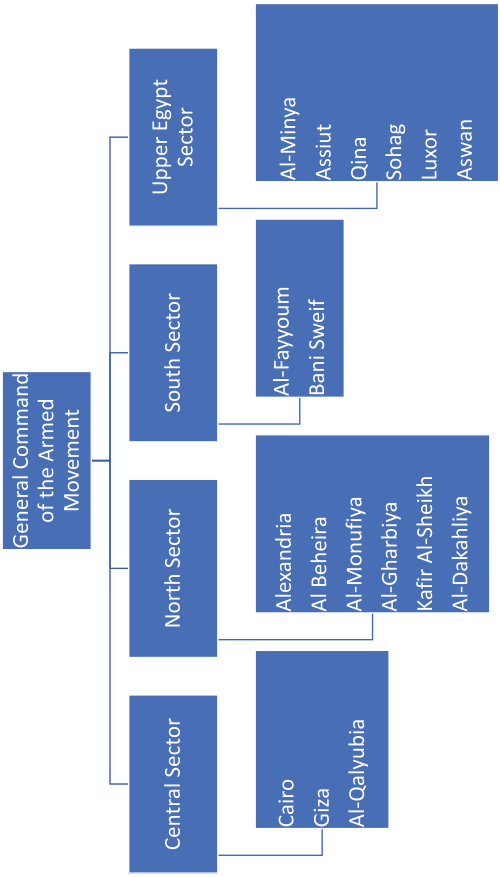

Fig. 14.5 HASM geographical structure

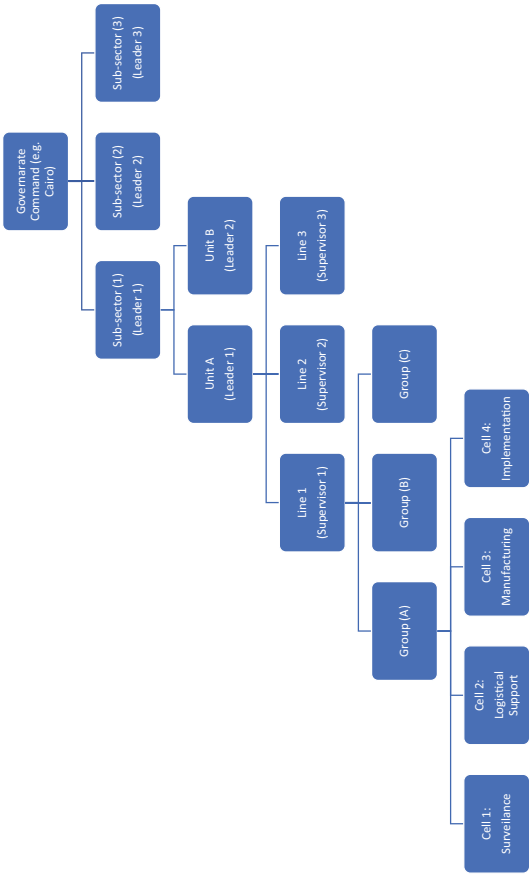

Fig. 14.6 HASM vertical structure

Hisham Barakat in 2015, the bombing of six police officers in 2016, the attempted assassination of former Grand Mufti Sheikh Ali Gomaa in August 2016, and the explosion at Myanmar Embassy in Cairo in 2017. The group was designated as a terrorist organisation in Egypt and the U.S. in 2018, designating the Turkey-based Musa and al-Samahi as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.[57] Noteworthy, HASM's structure and political agenda make it more of a threat to Egyptian national security than any other movement, including the ISIS-Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province), which we will talk about shortly.

The Emergence of the Islamic State in Egypt

In November 2014, the Ansar Beit Al Maqdis (ABM) announced its allegiance to Islamic State, and changed the Sinai-based group's name to Islamic State (Wilayat Sinai). The ABM was established in the wake of the 2011 revolution, where Palestinian militia members joined the Tawhid wal Jihad Egyptian terrorist organisation based in Sinai, targeting Israeli interest in Sinai and the Gaza Strip.[58] The group became known after claiming the explosion of Egyptian-Israeli gas pipelines in Sinai in 2011. Following the ouster of Morsi in 2013, the organisation launched a series of deadly attacks targeting mainly Government and security forces in Sinai and other areas in Egypt, including Cairo and Giza. However, there is no evidence of the ABM's direct affiliation with the MB.

Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The Egyptian Government did not declare any accurate estimates on Egyptian nationals who travelled to join jihadi militias in foreign conflicts. However, third-party reports estimated that 1000–5000 foreign terrorist fighters in Iraq, Syria, and Libya originated from Egypt.[59] Egyptians have

[57] https://eg.usembassy.gov/state-department-terrorist-designations-of-hasm-and-its-leaders-and-maintenance-of-pij-fto-designation/.

[58] Tawhid well Jihad is a Sunni takfiri militia group founded in 1997 using Sinai to launch attacks against Israel.

[59] See Middle East Institute, Mohamed Elmenshawy, "Egypt's War on Terror: ISIS, President Sisi, and the U.S.-led Coalition"; published 6 November 2014 http://www.mei.edu/publications/egypts-war-terror-isis-president-sisi-and-us-led-coalition; see Schmid, Alex. (2015). Foreign (Terrorist) Fighter Estimates: Conceptual and Data Issues.

mainly joined Islamic State, Al Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda, and other militia groups; however, the breakdown of loyalties is unknown.

Former President Hosni Mubarak took a hardline position against Islamists and Egyptians who joined foreign conflicts. His successor, Mohammed Morsi, reportedly loosened Egypt's policies. In 2013, Morsi removed the names of at least 3,000 militants from Egypt's most-wanted lists. He also appeared at a June 2013 rally held by hardline clerics. While Morsi rebuffed the clerics' explicit request to endorse their call for Egyptians to join the fight against Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, Egyptian analysts viewed Morsi's presence at the rally as a tacit endorsement. Morsi also pledged the support of the Egyptian military and Government to those fighting against Assad.[60]

Some foreign fighters have returned to Egypt. In April 2014, the Egyptian authority arrested a 38-year-old national for planning terrorism and coordinating with extremist groups. The unidentified man had fought alongside the Al Nusra Front in Syria. At least four members of ABM reportedly died in Egypt in 2014 after returning from Syria.[61]

The Sisi administration passed new legislation requiring Egyptian travellers between the age of 18–40 to acquire security permission if travelling to Syria, Iraq, Turkey, or Qatar. The Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused the Government of abusing the legislation to restrict the travel of NGOs and human rights activists. In November 2015, a HRW report documented at least 32 cases of security officials confiscating travel documents of human rights activists and banning their exit from the country.

Some Major Terrorist Incidents in Egypt

Below is a highlight of some of the major terrorist attacks in Egypt since 2015. These include Al Rawdah Mosque Attack, Attacks on Egypt's Christian Communities, ISIS Bombing the Russian Airliner, Muslim

Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies. 6. 10.19165/2015.2.04.; see Counter-Terrorism Project, Country Report, https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/egypt.

[60] See Associated Press; Hendawy, Hamza; "Egypt was seen to give the nod towards jihadis on Syria"; 16 June 2013.

[61] See Daily News Egypt; Kortom, Hend; "Egyptian accused of terrorism charges after returning from Syria"; 13 April 2014.

Brotherhood Response to President's Mohammed Morsi's Ouster, and the Luxor Massacre among others. Below are some of the highlights.

Al Rawdah Mosque Attack

On 24 November 2017, about 25 to 30 militants wearing military combat uniforms and carrying ISIS flags drove five SUVs to the al Rawdah Sufi mosque in Bir al-Abed in the northern Sinai province. The militants attacked the mosque with automatic machine guns, killing at least 305 and wounding 128 in Egypt's deadliest terror attack to date. At least 27 children died in the attack. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi promised to respond with "brute force". There were no immediate claims of responsibility, but the Egyptian government suspects Islamic State Egyptian affiliate, the Sinai Province. The December 2016 issue of Islamic State's newspaper al-Naba specifically mentioned the Al Rawdah mosque and called for targeting Sufis.

Nonetheless, the Islamic State did not immediately claim the attack and some of its supporters denied the organisation's involvement in international media. Supporters of the Islamic State on the encrypted messaging service Telegram accused Egyptian Intelligence of carrying out the bombing to discredit the Sinai Province. Regional terror groups Hezbollah and HAMAS condemned the attack, while the al-Qaeda-linked Jund al-Islam promised retribution against the perpetrators. Ansar al-Islam, which claimed responsibility for an ambush of Egyptian troops the month before the mosque attack, also promised revenge.

Attacks on Egypt's Christian Communities

The Islamic State has increasingly targeted Egypt's Coptic Christian communities with bombings and other attacks, causing hundreds of Christians to flee their homes in the Sinai. In February 2017, Egypt's Islamic State affiliate released a propaganda video declaring Christians their "favourite prey". The group executed a Christian father and son in the Sinai the same month, burning them alive and then dumping their bodies on a roadside in el-Arish. In February 2018, its propaganda newspaper, Al-Naba, published an editorial calling for targeting Christians and tourists throughout Egypt.

On 11 December 2016, a suicide bomber exploded during a Sunday morning service in a chapel adjacent to St. Mark's Cathedral in Cairo.[62] The cathedral serves as the headquarters of Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Christian Church and its spiritual leader, Pope Tawadros II. At least 25 people were killed and 49 wounded in the blast.[63] Pope Tawadros II was out of the country at the time. Egyptian authorities identified 22-year-old Mahmoud Shafiq Mohammed Mustafa as the bomber, but no group immediately claimed responsibility. The Hasm movement—which claimed responsibility for an attack that killed six police officers two days earlier—condemned the bombing.[64] The Islamic State claimed responsibility two days later and threatened additional attacks against Christians and its Amaq News Agency identified the bomber as Abu Abdallah al-Masri, differing from the Egyptian government's identification. The organisation warned in its statement that "Every infidel and apostate in Egypt and everywhere should know that our war … continues". In response, el-Sisi called on Egypt's Parliament to draft legislation to allow more "decisive" methods of dealing with militants.[65]

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi declared a State of Emergency across Egypt after twin ISIS bombings killed at least 45 in two Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria on 9 April 2017. ISIS shooters attacked a police checkpoint near St. Catherine's monastery on 18 April 2017, killing one officer. It was the Islamic State's first attack on a monastery. On 26 May 2017, ISIS shooters killed at least 29 Copts travelling to the monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor. ISIS also targeted the monastery on 2 November 2018, killing at least seven and wounding 14 on a bus leaving the site after a baptism.

[62] *The Washington Post*, Raghavan, Sudarsan; Mahfouz, Heba "With bombing victims still dying, it's a somber Christmas for Egypt's Christians"; 7 January 2017.

[63] The Guardian; Michaelson, Ruth; "Egypt: three days of mourning declared after 25 people killed in Cairo bombing"; 11 December 2016.

[64] BBC News; "Cairo bombing: Cairo Coptic Christian Complex Hit"; 11 December 2016.

[65] *Washington Post*, Associated Press, BBC News, Al Jazeera, *Guardian*, *New York Times*, Reuters, Associated Press.

Bombing the Russian Airliner

The Islamic State's Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province), claimed responsibility for the bombing of a Russian charter flight from the Egyptian resort area of Sharm el-Sheikh to St. Petersburg in Russia, which crashed 25 minutes after takeoff on 31 October 2015, killing all 224 passengers and crew members. Alexander Bortnikov, Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) chief, confirmed on 17 November that traces of explosives were found in the debris. An investigation of the downed plane revealed it shattered in mid-air after the detonation of an explosive equivalent to up to 1 kg of TNT bomb.[66] The Islamic State's official magazine, *Dabiq*, claimed the group smuggled on board an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) concealed inside a Schweppes soda can. In February 2016, the Egyptian government acknowledged that terrorists had caused the crash.[67] This attack caused a significant loss to the Egyptian tourism industry, as several countries including Russia, Germany, and the United Kingdom halted flights to Egypt, alerting their nationals.

Muslim Brotherhood Response to President's Mohammed Morsi's Ouster

In response to the ouster of Mohammed Morsi in 2013, the Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters initiated violent protests in Raba'a square, one of the main squares of Cairo. Security forces subdued the violent protest, resulting in the death of over 500 and more than 300 injured from both sides.

The Egyptian government ultimately declared the Brotherhood a terrorist group following a bombing that killed 12 individuals in Mansoura. The Brotherhood continued to launch violent attacks against the new government in retaliation for Morsi's removal. The attacks primarily targeted police and military installations.

[66] ABC News, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, BBC News, Reuters, *New York Times.*

[67] ABC News, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, BBC News, Reuters, *New York Times.*

The Luxor Massacre

Members of the al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group IG) terrorist group killed 62 people, including 58 tourists, outside of the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Luxor on 17 November 1997.[68] The attackers posed as security forces to sneak into the tourist area. They indiscriminately sprayed machine-gun fire into the crowd and then killed the wounded survivors with knives. The six gunmen escaped the scene, but security forces tracked down and killed them two hours later.

The so-called Luxor Massacre was the bloodiest terrorist attack in Egypt to date. Egypt's Minister for Tourism, Mamdouh el-Beltagi, lamented that the massacre marked "the biggest crisis in the history of tourism in Egypt". After previous terrorist attacks had caused a three-year decline in tourism, Egypt was on track to have a record-breaking tourist year in 1997, with 4.2 million visitors expected to generate $4 billion in revenue, expanding the economy by 6.2 per cent. The Luxor attack caused the industry to plummet, spurring unemployment as hotels reported having less than a 20 per cent occupancy rate, and some were utterly deserted.[69]

Domestic Counterterrorism Efforts in Egypt

The Government of Egypt has responded to terrorist challenges in the country through a combination of domestic measures and international cooperation. The major domestic measures adopted are discussed below.

Legislation and Security

Over the past eight decades, counterterrorism efforts in Egypt were based on legal and security-led approaches. The different administrations would focus on prosecuting members of extremist groups and sentencing them with maximum sentencing, including the death penalty. Another approach was encouraging imprisoned senior leaders of extremist groups to negotiate an unofficial deal with the Government to denounce violence in exchange for reduced sentencing.

[68] *The Economist*; "Bloodbath in Luxor"; 22 November 1997.

[69] New York Times; Jehl, Douglas; "Massacre Hobbles Tourism in Egypt"; 25 December 1997.

In 2016 the Egyptian Parliament ratified the "Terrorist Entities Law" establishing a mechanism for designating organisations or individuals as terrorist entities.[70] In the same year, the Parliament ratified new counterterrorism legislation that increases penalties for terrorism-related crimes significantly.[71] In 2019, the Parliament's legislative committee approved further amendments to the Anti-terrorism law of 2015, increasing punishment to 10 years imprisonment for those who promote extremist ideology, as defined by the law. The punishment was increased to 15 years if the promotion was made at places of worship, public places, members of the police or Armed Forces, or places allocated for these forces.[72] Additional legislative efforts to counterterrorism included amendments to the penal code and criminal proceedings code, expediting the judicial proceeding of prosecuting terrorists.

In the wake of the Wilayat Sinai attacks in Egypt's Sinai region, President Sisi launched the military campaign (known as Operation "the Right of the Martyr") in September 2015 to defeat the terrorist threat and prevent the establishment of safe havens for militias groups. The four-phase operation resulted in killing 500 insurgents, destroying 130 vehicles belonging to the group, and destroying 250 terrorist hideouts.[73] This operation is one of a series of military operations started in 2011 in the wake of the Egyptian-Israeli gas pipeline bombings by the Sinai Liberation Army, a terrorist group aimed at sabotaging Egyptian-Israeli relations and claiming Sinai a base for its operations to counter Israel in Gaza.[74] The Egyptian Armed Forces extended military operations to the western desert near the western borders with Libya.

To prevent the smuggling of weapons by insurgents from HAMAS and strengthen border protection in Sinai, the Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) sought to destroy Sinai's tunnels and the Gaza strip aggressively.[75] The

[70] U.S. State Department; "Counterterrorism Country Report for 2016"; p. 181.

[71] Ibid.

[72] U.S. State Department; "Counterterrorism Country Report for 2019"; p. 116.

[73] Sky News Arabia; "Infographic…timeline for the military operations against terrorism"; 14 February 2018 (only in Arabic).

[74] Ibid.

[75] U.S. State Department; "Counterterrorism Country Report for 2016"; p. 182.

EAF maintained a de-populated buffer zone along the border with Gaza, extending to 1.5 kilometres from the border.[76]

Countering Terrorism Financing

According to the MENAFATF Fourth Follow-up Report dated November 2014, Egypt has shown the willingness and practical steps in reforming the counterterrorism financing legal framework.[77] In 2015, Egypt enacted several laws to strengthen measures to counter financing terrorism to align with international standards. Due to the largely cash-based economy and undocumented small-scale transactions, the Central Bank of Egypt promoted financial inclusion of individuals and small and medium enterprises.[78] Additionally, the Egyptian Government enacted several measures, including digitising government payments, introducing smartcards and banking services with mini-branches, while increasing ATMs and mobile phone applications.[79] Despite these efforts, abuse of charity organisations, smuggling of antiquities, and narcotics remain a substantial threat.

Countering Violent Extremism

Upon the commencement of his presidency in 2014, President Sisi called for reforming the religious speech in Egypt to counter extremism leading to terrorism. Based on his call, several religious institutions in Egypt took practical steps in this direction. In January 2019, the Ministry of Islamic Endowments (Awqaf) inaugurated its international Academy to train imams and preachers, bringing together more than 130 ministers of endowments and muftis worldwide for a conference to counter "extremism ideologies" and promote pluralism. Also, the Ministry launched a series of publications titled "Enlightening Thinking" to promote moderate Islam and religious tolerance. The Ministry of Awqaf additionally focused on bridging the divide between Christians

[76] Ibid.

[77] MENAFATF; "Mutual Evaluation Report – 5th Follow Up Report for Egypt"; 14 November 2014; p.4.

[78] U.S. State Department; "Counterterrorism Country Report for 2016"; p. 183.

[79] Ibid.

and Muslims by bringing representatives and religious leaders from both faiths to discuss mutual areas of concern addressing the sectarian divide, especially in Upper Egypt.

Additionally, Dar al-Iftaa, an official body associated with Al-Azhar that issues religious edicts, focused its efforts on denouncing extremism. To counter extremist narratives, the institution established a unit for monitoring takfiri fatwas (edicts). The monitoring unit is considered a monitoring and research tool serving the religious institutions in identifying extremist fatwas and providing the religious counter-narrative to it.[80] Notably, the monitoring team publishes regular reports and other publications on its website adjacent to the Dar al-Iftaa website.

On the regional scale, the Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Africa (CCCPA) launched its programme on "Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism Leading to Terrorism" (PERLT) in 2016. The training is the first of its kind in Africa to prevent radicalisation as a community-based activity, using traditional and Islamic inclusive narratives. The programme aims to equip local leaders and influencers with the necessary knowledge and skills to refute extremist interpretations of Islam while propagating an alternative narrative of peace and coexistence within their local communities.[81] So far, the PERLT programme has trained over 142 local community leaders from Africa and conducted advanced training courses for over 60 imams and religious leaders in various countries in Africa.[82]

Conclusion

Egypt has a long history of terrorism and violent extremism and for over eight decades, Egypt has been fighting terrorism ferociously. Using primarily security-led and legal approaches to counterterrorism, the Government maintained control over extremist and terrorist groups to the extent possible, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest and most sophisticated group in the country, if not in the region. However, these efforts did not address the root causes of radicalisation or push and pull

[80] See https://www.dar-alifta.org/ar/Module.aspx?sec=media&Name=aboutmarsad.

[81] See https://www.cccpa-eg.org/news-details/271.

[82] Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Africa (CCCPA); "Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism leading to Terrorism in Africa(PERLT) Fact Sheet"; September 2019.

factors for its followers. Terrorist groups, whether the MB or other Jihadi, Salafi or any armed movement, could use imprisonment and other counterterrorism efforts to their advantage. In some cases, prison helped them build internal resilience, reconstruct their organisational strength and gain sympathy from the public and the international community. Based upon this, terrorist groups survived multiple waves of the crackdown that hit them during different times over history.

After the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi in 2013, the Egyptian government started assessing the risk of violent extremist groups in Egypt and the extent of their threat accurately. Although the counterterrorism law enforcement sector has extensive experience in understanding the narratives, motives and typologies of terrorist organisations, Egypt's inclusion of prevention and counter violent extremist strategies only started post-2013 events. These efforts are evident in the initiatives to reform religious speech and require Islamic religious institutions to counter-narrative the "takfiri" edicts and hate speech spread by violent extremist groups.

However, Egypt's national counterterrorism strategy is considered an outdated model which does not match the updated terrorism threats in Egypt. To address terrorism effectively, Egypt needs to adopt a whole-of-society approach when developing and implementing its national counterterrorism strategy. To begin with, the government should consider strengthening its violent extremism prevention initiative. Building vital education in all phases, providing moderate religious awareness and addressing the root causes of violent extremism like poverty, unemployment, corruption, injustice, and marginalisation are crucial elements for successful prevention. Also, focusing on countering violent radicalisation and terrorist polarisation and recruitment in prisons is another critical area requiring improvements. Recent studies showed that using risk assessment tools to intervene effectively with high and at-risk offenders can provide favourable results in countering terrorism. Additionally, the government needs to focus on rehabilitating and reintegrating terrorist offenders to prevent offenders from returning to terrorist organisations after release.

Furthermore, the inclusion of civil society actors, local and religious leaders, and other relevant stakeholders in the national counterterrorism strategy, will bridge the gap between the security sector and the community. This relation is necessary to effectively counter violent extremism and terrorism while maintaining the rule of law and human rights. Finally, the inter-agency cooperation among the security sector and outside it

is a potential area for improvement, as it will enhance the quality of intelligence and lead to the successful prosecution of terrorist offenders.

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CHAPTER 15

Statecraft, Fragility and Terrorism in the Great Socialist People's Libya Arab Jamahiriya

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke

Introduction

The outbreak of the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) had far reaching consequences for Great Socialist Peoples Libya Arab Jamahirriya. First, it resulted in the violent collapse of Muammar Ghaddafi's dictatorship and emergence of a weak central government that lacked effective control over Libya's vast territory. It further fostered an environment for terrorist groups to establish active presence in the country. The consequence is that Libya once again became a country of concern. The inability of the succeeding administrations to effectively control the huge stockpiles of military firepower within it's jurisdiction escalated the illicit flows of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) within and beyond her territory. The Al Qaeda Network and

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@ndc.gov.ng

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Islamic State therefore leveraged on the fragile state situation to establish and maintain Khatiba(s) and Waliyat(s) respectively on Libyan soil.

The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya or State of Libya is an oil rich country in the Maghreb part of North Africa with political capital at Tripoli (Tarabulus). Other major cities are Benghazi, Misratah, Az Zawiyah, Tobruk, Sirte among others. The geographic terrain of Libya consists of mostly barren, flat to undulating plains, plateaus, and depressions while the climate comprise of the extremely desert in the hinterland and Mediterranean along the coast. Libya has a total landmass of 1,759,740sq.km and shares 4,339 km international borders with six neighbouring African countries as follows Algeria (989 km), Chad (1,050 km), Egypt (1,115 km), Niger (342 km), Sudan (382 km), and Tunisia (461 km).[1] In addition, Libya has a coastline of 1,770 km on the Mediterranean Sea.[2]

In 2022, the World Health Organisation put the population of Libya at 6,812,340 and projected an increase of 25% to 8,539,983 by 2050.[3] The ethnic composition of the population comprises of Arab and Amazigh (Berber) 97% while others comprising of Egyptian, Greek, Indian, Italian, Maltese, Pakistani, Tunisian, and Turkish constitutes a paltry 3%.[4] The Amazigh were the indigenous people of Libya prior to the conquest of North Africa by the Arabs from Middle East and accompanying introduction of Islamic culture.

Politically, Libya attained independence from Italy on 24 December 1951 after a period of armed struggle and King Idris of Sennusi dynasty became the first, and at the same time, last King of the Kingdom of Libya. However, on 1 September 1969, a group of young military officers described as the Free Officers Movement presumably led by Colonel

[1] Central Intelligence Agency, "Land Boundaries" *World Fact Book*, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/land-boundaries/#:~:text=total%3A%206%2C734%20km%20border%20countries%20%286%29%3A%20Libya%20989,1%2C941%20km%3B%20Niger%20951%20km%3B%20Tunisia%201%2C034%20km (accessed 24 August 2024).

[2] Mongabay, "Libya: Geography" https://data.mongabay.com/reference/new_profiles/148.html (accessed 24 August 2024).

[3] World Health Organisation, "Libya" https://data.who.int/countries/434 (accessed 24 August 2024).

[4] United States Department of States, "Libya 10/7" https://2009-2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/libya/94630.htm (accessed 24 August 2024).

Saad ed-din Bushweir staged a bloodless coup, often referred to as the *al-Fateh Revolution* or *1 September Revolution* which overthrew the Senussi monarchy of King Idris 1 who was on state visit in Turkey. Subsequently, the heir apparent, Crown Prince Hassan who was in Libya at the time of the coup pledged support for the new regime run by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) which renamed the country as Libya Arab Republic, thereby bringing an end to the Senussi dynasty.[5]

The RCC named its cabinet on 8 September 1969 and named Colonel Muammar Ghaddafi as the Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Ghaddafi later took the title of Prime Minister in January 1970 and pursued the policy of "unity, freedom and socialism" at the domestic level in line with the aim of the al-Fateh Revolution and foreign policy of Arab unity—proposing a series of mergers and federations with neighbouring countries.[6] However, beginning from September 1975, Colonel Ghaddafi published several essays which culminated to contents of the Green Book, a document that outlined the Ghaddafi ideology of the Third Universal Theory considered as alternative to capitalism and socialism. Under Ghaddafi, Libya assumed the name of Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyya or State of the Masses on 2 March 1977.

Under the 1977 constitution, Ghaddafi governed Libya through local councils and multi-layered popular assemblies referred as people's congresses, with executive institutions (people's committees) in line with the governing ideology operated by political cadres (revolutionary committees). Ghaddafi renamed Libyan embassies abroad as the Libyan People's Bureau and established 31 municipalities (singular—Shabiya, plural—Shabiyat) for administrative purposes within the country namely: Ajdabiya, Al Jabal al-Akhdar, Al Jufrah, An Nuqat al Khams, Baniwaleed, Benghazi, Butnan, Darnah, Gharyan, Ghat, Ghdames, Green Belt, Gubba, Jfara, Kufra, Mari, Mezda, Misurata, Murgub, Murzuq, Nalut, Tarhuna & Msallata, Sabha, Subrata & Surman, Surt, Tripoli, Wadi Alhaya, Wadi Shati, Wahat, Yefren & Jadu, and Zawiya. From 1986, the country became as the Great Socialist People's Libya Arab Jamahiriya in 1986 after the United States bombed the country. Ghaddafi remained in

[5] British Broadcasting Corporation, "1969: Bloodless Coup in Libya" news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/1/newsid_3911000/3911587.stm (accessed 24 August 2024).

[6] Ibid.

power till he was overthrown and killed in October 2011 during the Arab Spring in Libya.

As Muammar Ghaddafi consolidated his grip on state power in Libya, he took on radical involvement in regional and global affairs, and came at odds with a world polarised along Cold War lines. Ghaddafi's radical foreign policy orientation found expression in Libya's role in Africa and the Middle East especially the Arab–Israeli question and significantly guided the country's relations with the western world and major international organisations.

Libya's geo-strategic size and location, enormous endowment in the highly valued energy resources as well as Ghaddafi's radical disposition and sympathy with the Palestinian course in Middle East resulted in the country's support for revolutionary movements across the globe and Ghaddafi deployed all elements of state power to project his priorities to the detriment of major western powers. The *Haiat amn al Jamahiriya* or Jamahiriya Security Organisation otherwise referred as the External Security Organisation (ESO) of Libya is generally considered the agency that coordinates the country's support for international terrorism. Herein lies the roots of Libya's profile as a state sponsor of terrorism at domestic and international levels.

Yet, the outbreak of the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North African (MENA) and the violent overthrow of Muammar Ghaddafi's dictatorship stimulated new dynamics of state fragility in Libya as the successor government in Tripoli became visibly unable to effectively exercise full sovereignty of the territory. Consequently, rival armed groups who had previously fought against the Ghaddafi regime during the rebellion, now fight against the government in Tripoli. This chapter therefore examines the role of Libya in terrorism during and beyond the Ghaddafi era. Further analysis of Libya's alleged roles in international terrorism are discussed below.

Muammar Ghaddafi's Libya and the Myth of State Terrorism

For more than three decades of Ghaddafi regime, several western media and policy circles considered Libya as a state actor that employs of terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy. This negative perception earned Libya the status of a country of concern such that on 2 December 1979, the United States officially designated Libya as a state sponsor of

terrorism, a declaration which led to the suspension of United States embassy operations in Libya and exit of America's Charge d'Affaires in Tripoli. This designation came after the United States Department of States Director for Combating Terrorism, Ambassador Anthony C.E. Quainton had in January 1979 informed Libya's Foreign Minister that Tripoli needed to assume a different attitude towards terrorism as a prerequisite for improved bilateral relations with America.[7] The Ronald Reagan administration buttressed Washington's position when it ordered Tripoli to shut down Libya People's Bureau in Washington D.C citing Libya's support for international terrorism and disregard for the norms of international behaviour as reasons.[8] In July 1985, Reagan mentioned Libya as belonging to the "Confederation of terrorist States" alongside Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua and North Korea that engaged in war against the government of the United States.

The Ghaddafi regime was known to harbour and provide training camps and logistics to foreign dissidents engaged in rebellion abroad. For instance, Charles Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Foday Sankoh, leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels during the Liberia and Sierra Leone civil wars respectively were harboured and trained in Libya prior to the outbreak of rebellion in both West African countries.[9] Ghaddafi also provided sanctuary or safe haven to Middle East radical groups including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC), Fatah dissidents and the Abu Nidal Group whose militants received training, funding and logistics including Libyan passports which facilitated their engagements in violent acts on the wider international scene.[10] Libya provided the international passports used by Abu Nidal terrorists in the attack on El Al airport counters in Italy and Austria in December 1985. The growing perception of Libya's sympathy for international terrorism was buttressed by the burial on Libyan soil, of five members of the Black September

[7] United States Department of States, "US-Libya Relations, 1786–2008: A Chronology" *Op. Cit.*

[8] Ibid.

[9] Okereke Nna-Emeka Chibueze, "Conflict and Development in Africa: Challenges of the African Union" being a PhD thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria Nsukka, July 2007.

[10] Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, "Libya Under Qadhafi: A Pattern of Aggression" https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection (accessed 26 August 2024).

Movement that died in the course of the kidnap and murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics in Germany.

Libya under Ghaddafi was also accused of abusing diplomatic privileges abroad by storing explosives, arms and ammunition in diplomatic premises in utter violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Practice 1961. This was brought to light on 22 April 1984 when a British policewoman, Yvonne Fletcher was killed and 11 anti-Ghaddafi demonstrators were wounded by gunshots from the Libyan Peoples Bureau in London, an incident which led to severance of diplomatic ties between Libya and the United Kingdom.[11] A month earlier, four bombs exploded in London and Manchester near the homes of Libyan exiles and business places frequented by them while three others were diffused, injuring over 25 persons. Furthermore, the Ghaddafi regime embarked on the assassination of Libyan nationals considered officially as anti-Ghaddafi elements and by 1981, a total of 11 Libyan dissidents abroad were murdered while another five attacks on Libyan dissidents were executed in Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and West Germany in 1985.[12]

At the G-7 Economic Summit held in Tokyo in May 1986, the world leaders in attendance, designated Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism. Ghaddafi's Libya was specifically accused by US Department of States, of using "surrogate terrorist groups" to attack western interests across the globe noting that Libya had supported an average of one terrorist attack per month in the last two decades of the Ghaddafi regime.[13] The G-7 states therefore advocated for stringent measures against state actors involved in sponsoring terrorism, including arms embargoes and bans, travel embargoes, and improved extradition procedures.

Other terror acts linked to the Libyan state under Ghaddafi include the September 1984 plot to assassinate former Chadian President Hissene Habre, using a briefcase bomb and the failed plot to assassinate former Zaire President, Mobutu Sese Seko September 1985. Ghaddafi's Libya also provided refuge to Carlos the Jackal and members of the Popular

[11] Dominic Casciani, "Yvonne Fletcher Murder: Libyan Suspect Faces Private Prosecurtion" *British Boadcasting Corporation News,* 17 April 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-68826304 (accessed 4 September 2024).

[12] Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, "Libya Under Qadhafi: A Pattern of Aggression" *Op. Cit.*

[13] Ibid.

Front for the Liberation of Palestine whose network of terrorists perpetrated the Vienna siege of in which Oil Ministers from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting in December 1975 with mission to kidnap 11 oil ministers of OPEC states, hijack a plane and sustain global attention to the Palestinian question.[14]

In the aftermath of the peace treaty, between Egypt and Israel in 1976, otherwise referred as the Camp David Accord, the Ghaddafi regime in Libya seemed to define Egypt as a special target for hostile foreign policy involving acts of terrorism. Two foiled attempts to murder Libyan exiles in Egypt were foiled by Egyptian security services. In November 1984, former Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak announced the arrest of four assassins sent by Libya to eliminate former Libyan Prime Minister Bakoush in Egypt. Libya's complicity in the operation became glaring as Egyptian authorities compelled them to send fake photos of a presumably dead Bakoush to Libyan embassy in Malta. In response, the official Libyan press sources declared that Bakoush has been eliminated by suicide squad sent abroad "to liquidate the enemies of the revolution".

Another terrorist acts against Egypt linked to Ghaddafi's Libya, was the explosion of two bombs at Cairo International Airport in October 1981, a week after the assassination of the Egyptian leader, Anwar Sadat. The bombs were concealed in luggage removed from a flight that originated from Tripoli. Libya was also suspected of pursuing an alleged plot to assassinate Anwar Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak through Egyptian dissidents aligned with Libya's clandestine cells in Egypt.[15] Others include acts of economic sabotage perpetrated from a Libyan vessel captained by a senior Libyan commando that laid mines in the Red Sea and Gulf of Suez which damaged 18 merchant ships between July and August 1984.

Like Egypt, Tunisia and Sudan also experienced Libya's acts of international terrorism in North Africa. Ghaddafi provided supports for Tunisian guerillas that invaded the mining town of Gafsa in Southern Tunisia in 1980 and allowed its territory to be used by Tunisian saboteurs based in Libya to explode dynamites on a pipeline near the Libya-Tunisia border in January 1984. Libya was further implicated in terrorist acts against Tunisia when a Libyan diplomat smuggled 100 letter bombs addressed

[14] Aaya Al-Shamahi, A. Alaa and Hossam Sarhan, "Turning Point: The Siege of OPEC 21st December 1975" *Middle East Eye*, 8 February 2024, https://www.middleeasteye.net/video/turning-point-siege-opec-21-december-1975 (accessed 26 August 2024).

[15] Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, *Op. Cit.*

to Tunisian journalists into the country in September 1984. The letters targeted a journalist who criticised Ghaddafi for the expulsion of about 30,000 Tunisian workers from Libya and an explosion wounding two postal workers.[16] This incident culminated in the severance of bilateral relations between Tripoli and Tunis.

Libya's list of international aggression through acts of terrorism has also been targeted at the United States of America. During the speech commemorating the 16th anniversary of 1st September 1969 coup, Muammar Ghaddafi declared to Libya audience that "we have the right to fight America, and we have the right to export terrorism to them…"[17] Subsequently, he declared at a press conference on 2nd January to "pursue US citizens in their country and streets" if the United States takes action in response to Libya's alleged involvement in the Rome and Vienna terrorist attacks.

The list of terrorist acts against United States interests that are linked to Libya sponsorship during the Ghaddafi era include the 1977 plot to assassinate American Ambassador in Cairo, the 1979 invasion of United States embassy in Tripoli and the discovery by Sudanese authorities of an alleged Libya plot to detonate explosive at an American Embassy club in Khartoum. In May 1985, Egyptian security services foiled the plot Libya backed Palestinian radicals to attack and destroy the Embassy of United States in Cairo using a truck loaded with explosives. Furthermore, an attempts to assassinate Libya dissidents in the United States by Libya hired assassins were also recorded leading to the expulsion of an official Libyan diplomat serving at the United Nations who was declared *persona non grata* status in May 1985 while 16 non official Libyans in the United States were subpoenaed to appear before a United States grand jury in connection to kill perceived Libyan dissidents across the United States.[18]

In January 1986, the United States further imposed economic sanctions on Libya over Tripoli's support for the 17 December 1985 terrorist attacks at Rome and Vienna airports perpetrated by the Libya backed Abu Nidal organisation. Ghaddafi's Libya was also accused of complicity in the planning and bombing of Labelle Discotheque in West Berlin on 5 April 1986 in which two of the three confirmed dead persons and

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

50 wounded were American military personnel. While the United States accused Tripoli of perpetrating the discotheque attack through the Libyan People's Bureau in East Berlin, the Ghaddafi regime denied the alleged Libya involvement in the incident and vowed to attack United States interest worldwide if America attack Libya. The United States launched retaliatory attacks on Libya's major cities of Benghazi and Tripoli on 15 April 1986 targeting Libya's military defence and security assets. The US response codenamed *Operation El Dorado Canyon* comprised of air raiding resulted in 36 Libyan fatalities involving Ghaddafi's adopted daughter. The bombing of the Pan American passenger jet over Lockerbie in Scotland followed these incidents and opened Libya to serious international pressures and sanctions.

Libya and the International Politics of Pan Am 103 Airline Bombing

The single most damning incident that grossly severed Libya's relations with the United States, United Kingdom and United Nations was the bombing of a New York bound Boeing 747 Pan American (Pan Am) airlines that took off from London's Heathrow airport and flying over Lockerbie in Scotland while cruising at 31,000 feet above sea level on 21 December 1988. All the 259 persons onboard the passenger jet, comprising 246 passengers and 16 crew members which included 189 Americans died in the explosion which further killed another 11 innocent persons on ground in Lockerbie.[19] It was speculated that the terrorist organisation and terrorists that perpetrated the Pan Am 103 bombing probably timed the bomb for the aircraft to explode over the sea, leaving no traces, but since it encountered delay prior to take-off, the explosion occurred over land in Lockerbie, Scotland. The Lockerbie bombing remained the single most devastating terrorist attack on the United States citizens prior to the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York.

Analysis by the United States external intelligence organisation, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), indicates that the plastic explosive that detonated in the forward cargo of the aircraft scattered victims and

[19] Robert D. McFadden, "Megrahi, Convicted in 1988 Lockerbie Bombing, Dies at 60" *The New York Times,* 20 May 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/21/world/africa/abdel-basset-ali-al-megrahi-lockerbie-bomber-dies-at-60.html (accessed 1 September 2024).

debris across an 81-mile long corridor and 845 square miles in area.[20] This incident opened a floodgate of diplomatic hostilities by the United States and her allies against Libya and culminated in the intervention of the United Nations Security Council. Further details of the investigations indicated that the aircraft blown up by Semtex plastic and a Swiss timing device linked to a type sold to the Libyan military and the bomb was suspected to have been hidden in a Toshiba cassette player loaded in a brown Samsonite suitcase, that contained clothing traced to a merchant in Malta.[21] Investigators further speculated that the deadly suitcase may have been fitted with a routing tag for baggage handlers put on another plane at Malta and flown to Frankfurt, where it was loaded on a Boeing 727 feeder flight that connected London, prior to the transfer of the suitcase to the Pan Am 103 plane.[22]

The link connecting the Lockerbie episode with Libya began in 1989 with the discovery of a piece of scorched shirt which contained a fragment of circuit board that the heat of the explosion had fused into the shirt's polyester fabric. Analysis by electronic experts at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Directorate of Science and Technology (DS & T) observed two things that reminded them of a devices seen before—first, similar timer was used in an earlier Libyan attack and secondly, the fragment exactly matched that of timer circuit manufactured specifically for the Libyans.[23]

Following detailed investigations and wide net of suspicion that cut across suspected Iranians, Libyans, Palestinians, and Syrians, the British authorities indicted two Libya's nationals identified as Abdelbaset Ali Mohammed al-Megrathi (former Libyan intelligence officer who worked as undercover for Libyan airline) and Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah (Libyan airline station manager in Malta) on 13 November 1991, for the bombing of the aircraft. At this stage, Libya denied involvement in the downing of the Pan Am Flight 103, and refused to honour Britain's request that the suspects be extradited to face trial over the incident, while opting

[20] Central Intelligence Agency, "Terrorist Bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103" https://www.cia.gov/legacy/museum/exhibit/terrorist-bombing-of-pan-am-flight-103/

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

rather to conduct its own investigations.[24] Tripoli rather alleged that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) could have carried out the Lockerbie bombing.[25]

At the multilateral world body, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 731 on 21 January 1992, which demanded that Libya extradite the suspects in the Pan Am 103 bombing to Britain or United States for trial without which economic sanctions will be imposed on the country. The Resolution 731 further demanded that Libya should cooperate with France investigation and inquiry over the bombing of a French airliner, *Union de Transport Aeriens* (UTA) Flight 772 in the northern part of the Republic of Niger. It is instructive to note that Britain, France, and the United States are not only permanent members of the UNSC but also allies within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). On its part, the Ghaddafi regime in Libya rejected the Resolution 731 on 12 February 1992, preferring to try the suspects within Libya and further offered to allow French investigators to interrogate the four suspects linked to the UTA bombing but Britain, France, and the United States rejected Libya's response.

The UNSC passed Resolution 748 on 31 March 1992 which demanded that the "Libyan Government must commit itself definitively to cease all forms of terrorist action and all assistance to terrorist groups and that it must promptly, by concrete action, demonstrate its renunciation of terrorism".[26] The text of Resolution 748 further demanded that Libya complies with Resolution 731 or face mandatory sanctions from 15 April 1992 until the UNSC is convinced that Tripoli has complied with the Resolution 731. The list of sanctions includes the denial of facilities to aircraft travelling to or from Libya, suspension of arms supplies, withdrawal of military advisers, and reduction of diplomatic staff and these took effect following the failure of Tripoli to comply convincingly. To strengthen international pressure on Libya on the Lockerbie suspects,

[24] United States Department of States, "US-Libya Relations, 1786–2008: A Chronology" https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/ci/ly/109174.htm (accessed 26 August 2024).

[25] Central Intelligence Agency, "Terrorist Bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103" *Op. Cit.*

[26] United Nations Security Council Resolution 748 (1992) adopted by the Security Council at its 2063rd meeting on 31 March 1992.

the United States Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) added Abdel-Basset al-Meghrabi and Al-Amin Khalifa Al-Fhima to its list of "Ten Most Wanted" persons and placed a reward of US$4 million on them.[27]

With the commencement of the sanction, the Ghaddafi regime announced on 14 May 1992 that it would end its connections with terrorist groups and that it would no longer permit the use of its territory or citizens for terrorist acts. Libya further agreed to welcome representatives of the United Nations to verify its compliance rate accordingly. Subsequently, Libya accepted that the suspects in the Pan Am 103 bombing could be tried abroad in a preferably, fair and just court, while the Libya mission at the United Nations issued a letter to the families of the Pan Am 103 victims stating the preparedness of the Government of Libya to participate in negotiations that will lead to the fair trial of the two suspects. Subsequently, the UNSC passed Resolution 1192 in August 1998, suspending sanctions against Libya if it accepted proposal from the United Kingdom and the United States that the two suspects be tried at The Hague in Netherland by Scottish judges under Scottish law; a proposal which Ghaddafi accepted at a media interview on the grounds that there were no hidden tricks. This came following the pronouncement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in February 1998, that it had jurisdiction over the dispute between Libya, United Kingdom, and the United States of the Lockerbie bombing.

In further expression of its preparedness to abide by the UNSC Resolution 731, Libya's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, Abuzed Omar Dorda, notified the UN General Assembly in September 1998 of his country's request that the two suspect be allowed to serve their prison terms in The Netherland or Libya if convicted. To reiterate its stance on the Lockerbie suspects, the United States Secretary of States, Madeleine Albright announced that America will adopt additional measures to compel Libya to surrender them if agreements were not reached within 30 days.[28] Libya complied with the assurance of South Africa's President Nelson Mandela who led series of negotiations, that the trial shall be free and fair, as Ghaddafi announced on 23 March 1999 that the two suspects shall be transferred to the Netherlands for trial and this

[27] United States Department of States, "US-Libya Relations, 1786–2008: A Chronology" *Op. Cit.*

[28] Ibid.

was done 13 days later as the suspects were handed over to the Scottish police at Camp Zeist, the Netherlands (considered a neutral venue for the trial), on 5 April. With the suspects now surrendered for trial, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1192 of 6 April 1999 suspending economic sanctions against Libya.[29]

The Pan Am 103 trial began in May 2000 and lasted for 85 days as the court charged Abdel-Basset al-Meghrabi and Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah with conspiracy to commit murder and violation of the Aviation Security Act (1982) to which both pleaded not guilty.[30] Amidst the contentions over the evidence used in the trial, the testimony of CIA's DS&T officer relating to his identification of the circuit-board fragment linked to the bombing especially the clear differentiation between the timers used by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and the ones used by the Libyans. The importance of his testimony lies on the ground that the Libyans suspects based their defence that the PFLP-GC could have executed the bombing but the CIA Expert whose identity concealed and voice altered, clearly identified the one used in the Lockerbie bombing to belong to the Libyan timer.[31] Consequently, when the judgement was passed on 31 January 2001, the Scottish judges convicted al-Meghrabi of involvement in the Lockerbie bombing and sentenced him to life imprisonment while Fhimah was acquitted of the offence.

It is instructive to note that none of the witnesses that testified at the trial directly linked the suspects to the bombing. The closest weak link came from Tony Gauci, a shopkeeper in Malta who identified al-Meghrahi as the buyer of the clothing which forensic experts linked to the bomb.[32] Yet, Gauci's claim seemed unreliable as he had also picked other probable customers during the investigative photo displays but only identified al-Megrahi after seeing his photograph on a magazine and in the court, and uncertainties also surrounded the date of sale or purchase of the clothing, thereby creating probable doubts for conviction.[33]

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Central Intelligence Agency, "Terrorist Bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103" *Op. Cit.*

[32] McFadden, *Op. Cit*.

[33] Ibid.

Another witness at the trial, Mr. Edwin Bollier, who owns the Mebo stall from where the device was sold to Libya, and one of his employees, Ulrich Lumpert identified the fragment from the crash as the one sold to Libya. Bollier was however reputed to have changed his story repeatedly after allegedly taking money from Libya, such that even the court considered him "untruthful and unreliable".[34] Yet, the court's inference that the bomb was transferred from the Frankfurt feeder flight constitutes another source of doubt because a security guard at the Heathrow airport revealed that Pan Am luggage area was broken into about 17 hours before the passenger jet exploded, a circumstance that was never investigated.[35]

Further semblance of concern and doubt was raised by a United Nations observer at the trial, Hans Köchler who described the process as "a spectacular miscarriage of justice". This perception was also echoed by Nelson Mandela, the chief negotiator between the parties. Yet, in 2007, another witness identified as Mr. Lumpert admitted that he had given false evidence at the trial, claiming he had stolen a timer and given to a Lockerbie investigator, confessing that the fragments he identified was never tested for residue of explosives despite that it was the only possible evidence of the involvement of Libyans. On the basis of the identified doubts, several investigative journalists and legal experts raised doubts on the evidence while describing al-Meghrahi, a scapegoat for the Ghaddafi regime which had for decades been identified as a state sponsor of international terrorism.[36]

Despite the series of doubts raised, the Government of Libya, which was under immense international pressures that cost it an estimated US$30 billion, accepted and respected the verdict.[37] Tripoli requested for the prompt end of the series of UN sanctions but the officials of the United Kingdom and United States governments insisted on Libya taking responsibility for the Lockerbie incident and pay compensation to the families of the victims. While lawyers representing families of the Pan Am 103 victims announced that Libya had accepted to pay a compensation of $2.7 billion on 30 May 2002, Libya denied making any such agreement and the United States Department of States insisted that the

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

sanctions regime will continue especially as the George Bush Jnr administration had earlier signed a bill of the Congress into law on 3 August 2001 which approved a five-year extension of the 1996 Sanctions Act against Libya and Iran.

Following sustained negotiations and international pressures on Libya through sanctions, Tripoli reached agreements with the lawyers representing the Pan Am 103 victims on 29 April 2003, Libya's Secretary for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation, Abdel Rahman Mohammed Shalgam announced Libya's acceptance of "civil responsibility" for the Lockerbie incident and further declared that the country will pay $10 million to each family in three instalments. This process required that after the first instalment, sanctions against Libya would be lifted, and that the country would be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism after the final payments had been made.[38] In furtherance of Libya's commitment to these declarations, the Ghaddafi regime sent a letter to the UNSC in which it accepted responsibility for its complicity in the Lockerbie bombing and the establishment of an escrow account in a Swiss Bank for the victims' family. Libya further pledge to renounce terrorism. This move by Libya was reciprocated by the representatives of the United Kingdom and United States who notified the UNSC that both governments were prepared to cooperate with Libya.[39] On 12 September 2003, the UNSC lifted the sanctions against Libya thereby opening the way for the resolution of the international conflicts between Libya, United Kingdom and United States over the Lockerbie incident and the payment of over $1 billion compensation to families of the Pan Am 103 bombing.[40]

In the wake of the Al Qaeda bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, officials of the United Kingdom and United States held meetings with Libyan officials in London on 4 October 2001 to secure Ghaddafi's compliance with UNSC Resolutions against Libya's support towards international terrorism. Coincidentally, the Ghaddafi regime which was also threatened by acts of terrorism pledged commitment to the resolutions and supplied intelligence about

[38] United States Department of States, "US-Libya Relations, 1786–2008: A Chronology" *Op. Cit.*

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

Libyan nationals accused of involvement with the Al Qaeda Network (AQN). Colonel Ghaddafi further announced in August 2002, the arrest of several suspected Al Qaeda elements and declared that Libya has integrated its foreign policy thrust within the objectives of the newly launched African Union and commitment to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa adopted in Algiers in July 1999.

Al-Meghrahi appealed his conviction at the European Court of Human Rights on 14 March 2002 was considered inadmissible in July 2003 and therefore refused. He further applied to the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC) on 23 September 2003 to have his conviction reviewed. On 28 June 2007, the SCCRC announced its decision to refer the appeal to the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburg on account of probable miscarriage of justice. In all, al-Meghrahi served 10 years of his sentence with effect from 5 April 1999 when he was handed over to Scottish police till 20 August 2009 when the Scottish Secretary of Justice, Kenny MacAskill released from prison on compassionate grounds due to terminal illness following a diagnosis of advanced cancer in 2008. His return to Libya coincided with the 40th anniversary of the 1 September Revolution.

While his release was greeted in Tripoli by cheering crowd, several families of the Lockerbie bombing felt aggrieved and sparked angry protests in the United States and United Kingdom with some critics alleging that the release was part of oil and gas deals reached between former British prime minister, Gordon Brown and Ghaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam at the European economic conference.[41] The grievances over his release continued during the Arab Spring in Libya and the accompanying armed conflict that overthrew the Ghaddafi regime as several western voices demanded that al-Meghrabi be returned to prison but the new leaders of post-Ghaddafi Libya did not return him until he died in May 2012. It is instructive to note that throughout his ordeal and incarceration at the Barlinnie prison, near Glasgow, where toilets were buckets in cells and later transferred to Greenock prison in Inverclyde Scotland, al-Meghrahi maintained his innocence.

[41] McFadden, *Op. Cit.*

In October 2015, Scottish prosecutors expressed intent to interview two Libyans identified as new suspects in the Lockerbie bombing. Similarly, the Office of the United States Attorney-General announced in December 2020 that another Libyan citizen identified as Abu Agela Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi was in custody and charged with active involvement in constructing the bomb linked to the Pan Am 103 bombing. Apparently, the manhunt for the perpetrators of the Lockerbie bombing still continues after three decades of the incident.

Libya's change of attitude towards international terrorism in the twenty-first Century could be explained by a number of factors which include the mounting international pressures and sanctions that accompanied Ghaddafi's refusal to handover two Libyan nationals linked to the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. Other reasons include Ghaddafi's concerns for domestic terrorism within the country amidst the devastating terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 in America and the firm international response against Osama bin Laden and his AQN. These dynamics most certainly propelled the Ghaddafi regime to rescind its support to terrorist groups across the world. Libya's Foreign Minister, Abdel Rahman Shalgam, reaffirmed Tripoli's renunciation of terrorism during a meeting with the United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice at the UN General Assembly in September 2005. In furtherance of the diplomatic rapprochement, the United States upgraded its Liaison offices in Tripoli to full embassy status after which Washington rescinded Libya's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism on 30 June 2006 and this new status was strengthened with the election of Libya for a two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in October 2007.

It is this new foreign policy orientation of the Ghaddafi regime that facilitated the adoption of the Claims Settlement Agreement between the United States of America and the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in August 2008. This agreement provided for the settlement of claims associated with terrorist assaults against United States citizens prior to 30 June 2006 that are linked to Libya and it provided for a lump-sum payment of $1.5 billion in settlement of all claims associated with Libya's act of terrorism against Americans.[42] This was preceded by the Libyan

[42] United States Department of Justice, "Claims Against Libya" Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States, https://www.justice.gov/fcsc/claims-libya-december-2008-referral-and-january-2009-referral (accessed 4 September 2024).

Claims Resolution Act signed by the George Bush Jr administration on 4 August 2008 which among other things requires the Secretary of States requires the United States Secretary of States to certify that the United States has received sufficient funds to pay the Pan Am 103 and La Belle Discotheque Settlements.[43]

Terrorism in Libya in the Post Ghaddafi Era

> *…NATO's hazardous military intervention in Libya in 2011. The destabilization of this brotherly country has exacerbated the factors of insecurity in our countries, namely terrorism, trafficking of all kinds, money laundering, community conflicts manipulated by terrorists and their foreign state sponsors, and the violent actions of isolated individuals.*
> —Abdoulaye Maiga[44]

Beyond the concessions made by Libya towards ending the Lockerbie issues, the Ghaddafi regime pledged compliance to international treaties against terrorism and commitment to responsible statehood, away from previous pariah or rogue status. Muammar Ghaddafi strengthened Libya's role in Africa and built on the improved diplomatic relations with major international actors especially the United States and its allies. Paradoxically, what initially appeared as diplomatic rapprochement between Libya and the western powers suddenly transformed into Ghaddafi's waterloo in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2011 in the MENA.

Beginning with Tunisia where popular uprising erupted following the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi, the accumulated grievances over prolonged dictatorship, political repressions, and accompanying mass frustrations in the MENA spread beyond Tunisia's borders and stirred the wind of regime change that swept away the Zine El Abidine Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak's rule in Egypt and the Muammar

[43] United States Congressional Records, July 2008, "Public Law 110 -301—Libyan Claims Resolution Act".
https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-110publ301 (accessed 4 September 2024).

[44] Republic of Mali, Address by Colonel Abdoulaye MAIGA, Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Spokesperson for the Government of the Republic of Mali, at the General Debate of the 79th ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York, September 28, 2024.

Ghaddafi dictatorship in Libya. Other MENA countries like Algeria, Morocco, and Syria among others also experienced the mass protests that characterised the Arab Spring. While Ben Ali and Mubarak peacefully stepped down and saved their respective country from chaos and destruction, Muammar Ghaddafi deployed various elements of national power to suppress and/or crush the mass agitations against his 42-year dictatorship. Ghaddafi's threat and/or resort to violent repression stimulated international concerns and actions. The President Barack Obama administration in the United States where several interest groups still nursed deep grievances on US casualties from Libya's previous support for international terrorism, passed Executive Order 13,566 on 11 February 2011. This instrument blocked property and prohibited certain transactions related to Libya. In the text, Obama noted in the order that:

> Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, his government, and close associates have taken extreme measures against the people of Libya, including by using weapons of war, mercenaries, and wanton violence against unarmed civilians… that there is a serious risk that Libyan state assets will be misappropriated by Qadhafi, members of his government, members of his family, or his close associates if those assets are not protected. The foregoing circumstances, the prolonged attacks, and the increased numbers of Libyans seeking refuge in other countries from the attacks, have caused a deterioration in the security of Libya and pose a serious risk to its stability, thereby constituting an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.[45]

At the United Nations, the Security Council adopted the UNSC Resolution 1970 of 26 February 2011 which imposed arms embargo, travel ban, and assets freeze in connection with the situation in the Libya Arab Jamahiriya.[46] Pursuant of UNSC Resolution 1970, additional measures encapsulated in UNSC Resolution 1973 were adopted by the Security Council on 17 March 2011 towards the protection of civilians from political repression by the embattled Ghaddafi regime in Libya. The UNSC Resolution 1973 demanded an immediate ceasefire in Libya, including an end to the current attacks against civilians, which it described

[45] Government of the United States, "Presidential Documents: Executive Order 13,566 of February 25, 2011" *Federal Register* Vol. 76, No. 41, Wednesday, 2 March 2011.

[46] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970, S/RES/1970(2011) https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/1970-%282011%29 (accessed 4 September 2011).

as crimes against humanity and a ban on all flights in the country's airspace, a no-fly zone, and tightened sanctions on the Ghaddafi regime and its supporters.[47] The United States and her allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) seized the opportunity provided by the UNSC Resolutions 1970 and 1973 to intervene and facilitate the overthrow of the much dreaded Ghaddafi regime under the guise of protection of civilians. Some radical observers consider the NATO intervention as a smokescreen to retaliate Ghaddafi's support for terrorist acts against western interests and therefore a betrayal of the olive branch extended by Muammar Ghaddafi to the unforgiven western powers. Ghaddafi was murdered shortly after his capture by NATO-backed rebels on 20 October 2011 thereby bringing an end to his 42-year rule in Libya.

The violent overthrow of the Ghaddafi regime in 2011 by NATO-backed rebels left far reaching consequences for Libya and her neighbours. First, the forced overthrow of Muammar Ghaddafi threw the country into a new cycle of conflict between the Government of National Accord (GNA) and armed groups under the umbrella of the Libyan National Army (LNA) including cells of the Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. The glaring absence of firm central authority in the country capable of effective law enforcement and order in the country created avenue for terrorist groups in Africa and beyond to establish active presence in Libya as was never experienced under the Ghaddafi era. In addition, Libya lost control of huge stockpiles of its weapons, arms and weapons ammunitions amassed in the Ghaddafi years with attendant implication for the security of Libya and its neighbours in North Africa, Sahel, and sub-Saharan Africa.[48] Consequently, the huge volume of under-controlled and under-regulated national armoury across the country transformed Libya to the epicentre of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) that fed terrorist organisations in the Sahel and MENA.

Among the groups that fought the Ghaddafi regime was the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) which is an Al Qaeda linked group in

[47] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, "Security Council Approves 'No-Fly Zone' over Libya, authorising 'All Necessary Measures' to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions" https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm (accessed 5 September 2024).

[48] Hassan Kone, "Where do Sahel Terrorists get their heavy Weapons" *ISS Today*, Institute for Security Studies, 12 February 2020. https://issafrica.org/iss-today/where-do-sahel-terrorists-get-their-heavy-weapons (accessed 16 September 2024).

Libya. Its original leader was Abdel Wahab Qaid (alias Abu idris al-Laibi), who spent 16 years in jail and assumed leadership of the LIFG following his release from prison at the beginning of the anti-Ghaddafi protests. Qaid was a member of the General National Congress (GNC) while leading the LIFG, and the GNC empowered him with funds to establish robust border control for southern parts of Libya which literally collapsed when Ghaddafi security structures in the area fled during the anti-Ghaddafi conflict.

The LIFG operated recruitment and financial activities between Fezzan and coastal Libya. The activities of the LIFG expanded in the country's southern regions where it established a network of contacts leveraging on traceable Al Qaeda links. Qaid's brother, Abu Yahya al-Libi, killed in Pakistan through a drone strike in 2012, was a deputy head of the Al Qaeda under Ayman Al-Zawihiri.[49] The LIFG maintained presence in the country in the aftermath of the Ghaddafi regime and although technically disbanded, members of the LIFG are believed to be active in the country's military and political sphere where they still hold several positions of power. To this effect, the LIFG was for a very long time considered as an active, powerful, and dangerous entity.[50]

The Islamic State in Libya (IS-Libya) originated in 2012 and formed from the merger of local Al Qaeda elements and former Libyan fighters in Syria known as the *Katibat al-Battar al-Libiyya* or Battar Brigade who later returned to Darnah in Libya to form the Islamic Youth Shura Council (IYSC) and pledged loyalty to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi after which it transformed to the IS-Libya in October 2014.[51] The core objective of the group was to take advantage of the gaps and uncertainties that accompanied the sudden and violent collapse of the Ghaddafi regime especially the absence of strong central authority. The under-regulated vast territory of Libya therefore provided sanctuary and strategic theatre for terrorist operations and expansion in North Africa and beyond. The group further established three distinct provinces (*Wilayat*) namely—*Wilayat Barga (Cynenaica Province), Wilayat Fezzan (Fezzan Province),*

[49] Kirkpatrick, D. (2012, October 06). Political Islam and the Fate of Two Libyan Brothers. Retrieved September 03, 2020.

[50] Stefano Marcuzzi and Jason Pack, "Terrorist and Armed Groups in the Fezzan-Sahel Region: Recruitment and Communication Tactics" (Riga, The NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence, December 2020).

[51] Ibid.

and Wilayat Tarabulus (Tripoli Province) all of which earned recognition of the IS Central. It is the organised and coordinated presence of the Islamic State in Libya that compelled Martin Kobler to describe the Islamic State as the only functioning government in Libya, providing protection and livelihood to vulnerable populations; a situation that facilitates the recruitment and radicalization to vulnerable individuals and groups across the country.[52]

In terms of its operations, the IS-Libya embarked on a massive recruitment campaign leveraging on the internet and movement of migrants from the Sahel to expand its membership. In the Sirte area, the IS-Libya recruited members from around Sebha and established sleeper cells in northern Libya. Among the Libyan extremist groups that declared allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was the Derna-based Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islami (MSSI) otherwise known as the Shura Council of Islamic Youths. Several members of the MSSI had fought in Algeria, Mali, and Syria. Following Baghdadi's acceptance of the pledge of allegiance, the MSSI embedded itself within the IS-Libya. However, following the group's defeat in 2016 in the Benghazi, Derna and Sirte areas, several of its recruits fled towards Jufra and other southern part of Libya where they exist in small sleeper cells in urban areas and the desert districts of Jufra, Murzuq, and Sebha.[53]

Other terrorist groups unleashed acts of terrorism in Libya since the collapse of the Ghaddafi era are Al Qaeda linked groups notably the Ansar al Sharia Libya (ASL)—Benghazi and the Ansar al Sharia Libya (ASL)—Derna which emerged during the anti-Ghaddafi rebellion in 2011. The ASL collaborated with other extremist groups to attack the United States Consulate in Benghazi in 2012 leading to the death of four Americans, including Ambassador Christopher Stevens.[54] Militants trained at

[52] Inga Kristina Trauthig, "Assessing the Islamic State in Libya the Current Situation in Libya and its Implications for the Terrorism Threat in Europe: The current situation in Libya and its implications for the terrorism threat in Europe" Paper presented at the 3rd conference of the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) Advisory Network on terrorism and propaganda, 9–10 April 2019, at Europol's headquarters in The Hague.

[53] United States Department of States Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Libya" https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/libya/ (accessed 7 November 2022).

[54] Counterterrorism Project, "Libya: Extremism and Terrorism" Centrepoint Brief and Blog, https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/libya-extremism-and-terrorism (accessed 16 September 2024).

the ASL camps in Benghazi are believed to have participated in the January 2013 terrorist attack at the Amenas gas plant in Algeria. The ASL joined the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (BRSC) with which they fought General Haftar forces, seized Benghazi and declared it an Islamic Caliphate in July 2014. The ASL/BRSC alliance also merged with a coalition of different Islamist groups in the Benghazi area to form the Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB) in 2016 but was disbanded in May 2017 prior to the recapture of Benghazi two months later by General Haftar's LNA on 5 July 2017.[55]

Despite the efforts to establish an inclusive GNA by competing Libyan groups through the signing of Libya Political Agreement (LPA) at Skhirat city, Morocco in December 2015, inter-group rivalries persisted and deepened Libya's security conundrum.[56] Expressing concerns over Libya's decline into deepening chaos, and in consistency with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2174 of 27 August 2014, and 2213 of 27 March 2015, the Obama administration passed the Executive Order 13,726. Extracts from the Executive Order noted that:

> …the ongoing violence in Libya, including attacks by armed groups against the Libyan state facilities, foreign missions and critical infrastructure as well as human rights abuses, violation of arms embargo imposed by the UNSC Resolution 1970 (2011), and misappropriation of Libya's natural resources threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, democratic transition, and territorial integrity of Libya, and thereby constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.[57]

Drawing from the above, the Executive Order 13,726 of 19 April 2016 expanded the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13,566 by suspending entry to the United States of persons

[55] Cameron Glenn, "Libya's Islamist: Who They Are–And What They Want" *Wilson Centre Insight and Analysis* 8 August 2017.

[56] Abdelsalam Mohamed Elhudairi and Huseyin Isiksal, "The Role of ISIS as a Religious Terrorist Group in the Instability of Libya in the Post-Gaddafi Era: The Case of Sirte" *Religion*, 13, 516, 2022, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060516 (accessed 26 September 2024).

[57] Government of the United States, "Presidential Documents: Executive Order 13,726 Blocking Property and Suspending Entry into the United States of Persons Contributing to the Situation in Libya" *Federal Register*, Vol. 81, No. 77 Thursday, April 21, 2016.

contributing to the deepening situation in Libya and further blocking access to their properties within US jurisdiction. The scourge of terrorism in Libya further put her neighbours under stress. Chad closed border with Libya in January 2017 alleging potential terrorist infiltration threaten security of northern Chad. The terrorist challenge in post-Ghaddafi Libya attracted international military intervention. The United States launched airstrikes against training camps around Sirte in January 2017. Further American airstrikes against terrorist sanctuaries in Libya were launched in September 2017 and August 2018. These were to cripple assets of the Islamic State and Al Qaeda network within Libya which was considered safe haven used by terrorists to plot attacks on western interests in Europe. The attack on Manchester concert in the United Kingdom on 22 May 2017 is considered instructive.

Despite the fractured solidarity between the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the General Khalifa Haftar's Libya National Army (GNA) aligned forces which dominate eastern Libya, both the GNA and LNA have continued counterterrorism assaults in Libya. In September 2019, the United States in coordination with the GNA conducted four precision airstrikes against IS-Libya in the southern frontiers which resulted in the elimination of 43 fighters of the IS-Libya while several others were injured. The GNA further arrested and detained over 31 suspected terrorists affiliated with the IS-Libya and the AQIM.[58] One of those arrested for terrorism related offences of collaboration with IS-Libya on 29 November 2019 was Emad Faraj Mansour al-Shuqabi. On its part, the LNA conducted over 25 raids in which it killed 44 and arrested 57 suspected terrorists. In one of the raids on 13 December 2019, the LNA arrested two men suspected of collaborating with Egyptian nationals to smuggle funds in support of the operations of the IS-Libya.[59] These arrests led to the recovery and confiscation of firearms and ammunition recovered from the suspects in Benghazi.

It is instructive to note that Libya's commitment to counterterrorism in the post-Ghaddafi era is implemented by a combination of institutions within and outside the GNA authority. The GNA affiliated groups involved include the Misrata Joint Security Operations Room (MJSOR),

[58] United States Department of States Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Libya" *Op. Cit.*

[59] Ibid.

the Special Deterrence Force based in Tripoli, otherwise referred as Rada Force and a Salafist militia nominally integrated into the GNA Ministry of Interior (GNA MOI). The capability of the GNA to reduce terrorism within Libya and its neighbours is largely constrained by its geographical spread and therefore restricted to areas under its control. Similarly, the LNA western, eastern, and southern counterterrorism also operated its own counterterrorism operation rooms. The inherent political divisions in Libya as well as the lack of clear mandate of the GNA and LNA however constrains the country's capacity to detect, deter, respond to, or investigate terrorist incidents. So far, despite the absence of firm central authority in Tripoli to effectively combat the terrorist challenge, Libya still remains a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) and also a member of the Defeat ISIS Coalition Counter ISIL Finance Group (CIFG). Below is a Table 15.1 showing some major terrorist attacks in Libya.

The Islamic State in Libya also launched repeated attacks on critical oil infrastructures in the bid to cripple the country's energy sector. Some of the attacks include the February 2015 attacks on the Bahi and Mabruk oil fields, March 2015 attacks on the Darha and Ghani oil fields, July 2015 attack on the Mellitah oil port, January 2016 attack on the Es-Sider oil facilities, September 2016 attacks on the Ras Lanuf, Es-Sider, and Zueitina oil facilities as well as the March 2017 attack on the Es-Sider oil facilities. These accounts were also characterised by the abduction of foreign oil workers from Austria, Bangladesh, Ghana, Italy, and Philippines among others. The consequence of these attacks is that Libya became a hotbed of domestic terrorism with international repercussions.

Table 15.1 Major terrorist attacks in Libya in post-Ghaddafi Era

	Date	*Incidents*	*Remarks*
1	13 December 2019	Two men suspected of smuggling funds in support of the IS operations were arrested by the LNA-aligned Directorate of Central Investigation in Benghazi	This incident led to the recovery of firearms and ammunition in their homes and the arrest of another two men
2	29 November 2019	Emad Faraj Mansour al-Shuqabi was arrested for being the coordinator of ISIS and Ansar al Sharia	The operation leading to the arrest of Al-Shuqabi was executed by the Tajoura Branch of the Central Support Forces, and he was referred to the GNA Attorney General for prosecution
3	10 August 2019	Detonation of a car bomb in front of a shopping mall near the Commercial and Investment Bank in the Hawari neighbourhood of Benghazi. The bomb was targeted at a convoy of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)	Three UNSMIL guards were killed in the attack which also injured scores of bystanders. No group claimed responsibility for this attack
4	11 July 2019	Detonation of three explosive devices at the Huwari Cemetery in Benghazi during the funeral of Khalifa Mismari who was a former Special Forces Commander in Libya	Four persons were killed in this attack while 33 others were injured. No group claimed responsibility for this attack
5	18 May 2019	Fighters of the IS-Libya attacked a checkpoint near a facility of the Libyan National Oil Corporation along the Zilla-Waddan road. To avert being captured alive, one of the IS-Libya fighters detonated a Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED)	Three personnel of the Libya National Army were killed in the attack while four others were abducted

(continued)

Table 15.1 (continued)

	Date	*Incidents*	*Remarks*
6	9 May 2019	Elements of the IS-Libya attacked Ghadduwa town which is located about 45 miles south of Sebha in which three persons which included Ali al-Kaboush, a former Libyan diplomat in this attack were killed in this attack while another person was kidnapped	The IS-Libya also burnt 14 houses and a military facility of the LNA
7	4 May 2019	Elements of the IS-Libya attacked LNA forces of the 160th Brigade at the Jabril Baba camp near Sebha	Nine LNA personnel were killed in this attack of which one was beheaded. The IS-Libya also released inmates detained in the training camp's detention facility
8	9 April 2019	IS-Libya fighters killed two persons in Al-Fuqaha town in Jufra province of central Libya. The group also burnt several houses during the attack	One LNA security personnel was also kidnapped in the attack
9	25 December 2018	A Libyan diplomat and two other persons were killed in an attack against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tripoli	The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack which also claimed the life of Abdul-Rahman Mazoughi, a prominent leader of the Revolutionary Brigade militia group
10	10 September 2018	The headquarters of the Libya n National Oil Company was attacked by suicide bomber	Two persons were killed while 10 staff of the company were injured
11	2 May 2018	The High National Election Commission office in Tripoli was attacked by the IS-Libya	This incident led to the death of 16 persons

(continued)

Table 15.1 (continued)

	Date	*Incidents*	*Remarks*
12	February 2015	The IS-Libya abducted 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians at a luxury hotel at Sirte killing eight civilians including one American contractor	The abductees were later beheaded by their captors
13	27 January 2015	Ten persons comprising of five guards and five foreigners including an American were killed when terrorists launched attacks at Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli	

Source Compiled by the author in September 2024

Conclusion

Reflections on the foregoing analysis clearly demonstrates that Libya has been a country of concern with respect to terrorism during and beyond the Ghaddafi era. During the Ghaddafi regime, several countries especially the United States and her allies considered Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism and this assertion was backed by objective incidents in which Libya was considered complicit. Ghaddafi however sought and obtained exoneration from the list of state sponsors of terrorism prior to the rebellion that resulted in the Arab Spring and accompanying civil war that ended the Ghaddafi regime in 2011.

The violent overthrow of the Ghaddafi regime placed Libya at a crossroads as no strong central government has emerged to subdue competing armed groups and effectively steer the ship of statecraft over the large geographical territory. While a concert of efforts has been undertaken by competing domestic interests in Libya and international community to restore order within the country, the state of Libya is still confronted by challenges of governance as the polity is split across intense competing and contradictory identities associated with clan, ethnic and racial rivalries which became increasingly exploited by global terrorist networks.

In the absence of a united political authority and national military, Libya is confronted by several governance and security issues ranging from counterterrorism and counter insurgency operations. Elements of Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) and IS-Libya continue to ravage Libya's

territory with strong presence in the largely vulnerable parts of southern Libya and even attacking LNA and GNA assets with relative ease. The activities of these terrorist elements continues to wreck the foundations of national unity while threatening all efforts at restoring effective political authority over the vast territory while also threatening the security of its neighbours and the larger international community.

The resurgence of terrorism in post-Ghaddafi Libya is instructive of politics of extra-continental intervention in African states. Ghaddafi's dictatorship effectively controlled reactionary interests within Libya's vast and largely uninhabited territories. However, the forceful overthrow of his regime aided by the NATO crippled the central authority in Tripoli and transformed Libya as a critical epicentre of terrorism and terrorist logistic supply base especially in Africa. The danger in the Libya situation is that it will remain a source of threat to its neighbours if the domestic situation is not constructively addressed within the next decade because of its assets and current appeals to domestic, regional, and global terrorist organisations. The search for a new and acceptable constitution that will unite the population and competing domestic interests, build a united defence and security institutions that can sustain order and stability. It therefore implies that Libya is in dire need of international support for post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction.

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CHAPTER 16

State and Challenge of Terrorism in Mauritania

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Greg Fah Fombo

Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is a country in North Africa with a total area of 1,030,700 square kilometres (sq km), located on geographical coordinates of 20′00N and 12′00W and its frontier extends from North Africa's Maghreb region to West Africa's Sahel region.[1] Mauritania shares a total land boundary of 5,002 km with four African countries, Mali (2,236 km), Morocco/Western Sahara (1,564 km), Senegal (742 km),

[1] "Mauritania" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, accessed 27 June 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/mauritania/.

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@gmail.com

G. F. Fombo
Department of Political Science, University of Bamenda, Bamenda, Cameroon

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and Algeria (460 km) including a coastline of 754 km.[2] Its borders with Senegal are defined by the Senegal River. Mauritania has large deposits of mineral resources such as copper, crude oil, diamonds, gold, gypsum, iron ore, and phosphate.

On 28 November 1960, Mauritania attained political independence from France and this date is celebrated annually as the country's National Day Holiday. Mauritania has 15 administrative divisions called regions and these are: Adrar, Assaba, Brakna, Dakhlet, Gorgol, Guidimaka, Hodh ech Chargui, and Hodh El Gharbu. Others are Inchiri, Nouadhibou, Nouakchott Nord, Nouakchott Ouest, Nouakchott Sud, Tagant, Tiris Zemmour, and Trarza. The political capital of Mauritania is Nouakchott.

The Central Intelligence Agency estimates that by July 2021, the population of Mauritania will be 4,079,284.[3] As of 2020 the ethnic composition of Mauritania's population in percentages is Arab-speaking Black Moors (descendants of freed slaves) otherwise referred as *Haratine* and mostly Africans (40 per cent), White Moors known as *Beydane* and mostly Arabs (30 per cent), sub-Saharan Mauritanians that are non-Arab speaking and largely indigenous from the Senegal River Valley (30 per cent). The sub-Saharan group comprises of the Halpulaar, Fulani, Soninke, Wolof, and Bambara ethnic groups.[4] The dominant, and now official religion in Mauritania is Islam.

Inter-group relations, including inter-ethnic and inter-racial conflict, have a long history in Mauritania. Several factors including the unequal distribution of wealth, lack of political opportunities, and public resources are internal conflict factors. Several racial groups such as the Haratine and Afro-Mauritanians suffer structural and institutional inequalities and discrimination perpetrated against them by the dominant Moors, mostly Arabs. The Haratine are not prominent in senior positions in the military, public media and the Ministry of Interior and several other important institutions in the country and this has become a major source of

[2] Ibid. Note that the area considered as Morocco in the CIA World Fact Book for Mauritania is Western Sahara which Morocco still claims sovereignty over while the African Union and member states consider as an independent country and member organisation of the African Union.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

instability.[5] Consequently, ethnic and racial identities are politicised as Mauritanians can be radicalised along racial, religious, and ethnic lines.

As part of the social dynamics in the country, several young Mauritanian girls are forced into domestic servitude while the boys are attached to religious teachers under the Madras system, where they are exposed to the risks of traffickers and forced begging which make them vulnerable to extremist indoctrination. These facts are crucial to help us understand the relationship between the state and its citizens on the one hand, and the incidence of terrorism on the other. Finally, Mauritania also hosts refugees from several neighbouring countries in distress such as Mali and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) (Western Sahara) which have 68,855 and 26,001 registered refugees respectively taking refuge in Mauritania.

This chapter examines the dynamics of terrorism in Mauritania with emphasis on the nature, trends and consequences. It further examines the domestic measures as well as the various international partnerships adopted by the Government of Mauritania to combat the threat. It notes that although the Government of Mauritania has significantly subdued the activities of terrorist groups and individuals within its territorial space, the country still remains vulnerable to terrorist threats coming from its neighbours in the Sahel and Maghreb regions.

Overview of Terrorism in Mauritania

Historically, terrorism in Mauritania has been linked to discrimination meted to minority groups such as the Haratine's in the country. This was acknowledged by Anouar Boukhars, a Professor of Counterterrorism and Counter Violent Extremism at the African Centre for Strategic Studies at the National Defence University, Washington DC who noted that social injustice contributed to the emergence of terrorism in the country. In other words, Mauritania's experience of terrorism is linked to unfair socio-political and economic relations that encourage terrorist recruitment, mobilisation and attacks.[6]

[5] Anouar Boukhars, "Mauritania's Precarious Stability and Islamist Undercurrent" accessed 27 June 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/02/11/mauritania-s-precarious-stability-and-islamist-undercurrent-pub-62730.

[6] Anouar Boukhars, "Mauritania's vulnerability to Al Qaeda influence" in *Terrorism Focus*, Volume 4, Issue 24, 24 July.

The geographical location, nature of politics and cultural composition of Mauritania are considered critical factors in understanding the incidence of terrorism in the country. This is exacerbated by the fact that Mauritania shares contiguous borders with parts of North and West Africa notably Algeria and Mali which have histories of terrorism and violent extremism and also have played host to violent groups that resort to acts of politically motivated terrorism.

The *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC) otherwise referred to as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat and later the Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) established cells in parts of the country. The first AQIM cell in Mauritania was neutralised in April 2005 but related incidents demonstrated that several other similar cells have been planted across the country. On June 4, 2005, AQIM launched a terrorist attack on an army barracks in Lemgheity town, located in northern Mauritania near the Algeria and Mali borders resulting in the death of 15 Mauritanian soldiers and nine attackers.[7] The Lemgheity attack is symbolic. It is the first terrorist attack in Mauritania and the first attack attributed to the GSPC outside Algeria. The incident therefore shattered the prevailing myth in the country that "terrorism is something that happens to others" and further intensified security and political repressions which culminated to the collapse of the President Muawiya Weld Al-Taya administration within two months.[8] This terrorist attack remained the deadliest terrorist incident in Mauritania's history for almost two decades.

Between 2007 and 2011, Mauritania recorded nine more terrorist attacks. Specifically, four French tourists were killed at Aleg on 24 December 2007 while three soldiers were killed in another incident following a targeted attack on military assets in El Ghallawiya on 27 December 2008.[9] The El Ghallaway terrorist attack was preceded by

[7] Hassan Kone, "How has Mauritania managed to stave off terror attacks?" *Reliefweb*, accessed 27 June 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/mauritania/how-has-mauritania-managed-stave-terror-attacks.

[8] Abdallah Ould Mohammadi, "Mauritanian Counterterrorism Experience: Great Patience and Multiple Horizons" Islamic Military Counterterrorism Coalition, 27 September 2020, accessed 28 June 2021, https://www.imctc.org/en/eLibrary/Articles/Pages/Articles2792020.aspx.

[9] "Heightened insecurity not hindering aid operations" in *The New Humanitarian*, accessed 27 June 2021, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/76147/mauritania-heightened-insecurity-not-hindering-aid-operations.

another in which 11 soldiers and their civilian guide were killed in Tourine on 14 September 2008.[10] In November 2009, three Spanish aid workers, Albert Vilalta, Alicia Gamez, and Roque Pascal, working with the Catalan-based aid group, Barcelona-Accio Solidaria, were abducted while travelling in a humanitarian convoy between Nouakchott and the coastal city of Nouadhibou.[11]

Furthermore, in February 2011, two planned terrorist attacks that targeted Mauritania's Ministry of Defence and the Embassy of France were aborted. Two vehicles, each loaded with 1.5 tonnes of explosives, were neutralised at the entrance into Nouakchott before they could be used in the attack. The last officially reported incident of terrorism on Mauritanian soil was the abduction of a gendarmerie policeman, Ely Ould Mokhtar, by a suspected AQIM cell in Adel Bagrou, an area along the shared border with Mali on 20 December 2011.[12] As a result of possible threats of terrorist attacks in Mauritania, the annual rally from Paris to Dakar which usually passes through Mauritania was cancelled for the first time in 30 years.

Statistics from the Milken Institute (2006) list Mauritania's share of terrorist incidents in North Africa between 1968 and 2004 at 2.4 per cent and a corresponding share of injuries and fatalities at 1.3 per cent. In terms of terrorism indicators in North Africa between 1968 and 2004, the Milken Institute also identified eight incidents of terrorism in Mauritania with a total of 38 fatalities.[13] Other AQIM terrorist attack statistics indicate that Mauritania recorded zero terror attacks in 2006 and 2010, but recorded 2 terrorist attacks in 2007 with eight victims. In 2008 and 2009, Mauritania experienced two terrorism incidents that claimed 17 victims

[10] "Mauritania: Terrorist attack hits already fragile economy" Refworld, accessed 27 June 2021, https://www.refworld.org/docid/48e085e00.html.

[11] Laurent Prieur and Jason Webb, "Three Spanish aid workers kidnapped in Mauritania" Reuter, 29 November 2009, accessed 27 June 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mauritania-tourists/western-tourists-attacked-in-mauritania-sources-idUSTRE5AS23W20091129.

[12] Kone, Op. Cit.

[13] Anneli Botha, "Challenges to Understanding Terrorism in Africa" in Wafula Okumu and Anneli Botha, *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps* (Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2008.

while 5 terrorist attacks with 10 victims were recorded in the country in 2009.[14]

Following the Arab Spring in Libya and accompanying Tuareg rebellion in Mali, terrorist attacks increased in Sahel. This notwithstanding, the terrorist incidents in Mauritania are considered largely negligible if not non-existent especially since 2010. However, Mauritanian nationals from White Moors and the Haratine clans are alleged to have joined the extremist groups in Mali. This fact heightened concerns about the possibility of future attacks in Mauritania.[15] In fact, some Mauritania nationals have fallen victims to terrorist attacks in neighbouring Mali. For instance, on 18 July 2021, two Mauritanians and three Chinese working for the Mauritania road building firm, ATTM and Chinese construction company, COVEC were abducted from a construction site located about 55 kilometres from the town of Kwala in northern Mali.[16]

On a scale from 0 to 10 measuring the impact of terrorism on countries, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) of 2020 ranked Mauritania at zero. There has been a gradual decline in the incidence of terrorism in the country from 1.85 index in 2011 to zero in 2020. Available statistics indicate that in 2010 and 2011, the GTI for the country was 2.23 and 1.85 respectively.[17] It rose to 2.18 index in 2012 but experienced a sustained decline from 2013 (1.19 index), 2014 (0.56 index), 2015 (0.31 index), and 2016 (0.07 index) respectively and between 2017 and 2020. The GTI for Mauritania has consistently been at zero despite the COVID-19 pandemic.[18] It is now pertinent to know how Mauritania achieved the zero status with no new incidents of terrorist attack.

When explaining the incidence of terrorism in Mauritania, there is speculation that the spread of radical Islam in the Maghreb also accounted

[14] Jacques Roussellier, "Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel: Al Qaeda Franchises or Freelance?" In *Policy Brief*, No. 34, August 2011, Middle East Institute, Washington DC, p. 6.

[15] Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI), "Country Report: Mauritania 2020" p. 5.

[16] "Three Chinese, two Mauritanians kidnapped from construction site in northern Mali" accessed 19 July 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/three-chinese-two-mauritanians-kidnapped-construction-site-northern-mali-2021-07-18/.

[17] "Mauritania—Global Terrorism Index" World Data Atlas, accessed 27 June 2021, https://knoema.com/atlas/Mauritania/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-terrorism-index.

[18] Ibid.

for the incidence of extremist violence in Mauritania. This has been linked to the contradictions associated with the existing contentions over the nature of political and religious authority in the country which in turn elicited extremist overtures from Al Qaeda linked cells in North Africa and the Sahel.[19] Some Islamic scholars in Mauritania contribute actively to debates on violence and rebellion in Islamic law and some of Mauritanians are active participants in extremist networks that are violent in nature.

Furthermore, the shared borders with Algeria and Mali have for a long time been the incubators for AQIM and its mutating cells. Coincidentally, the terrorist activity still persists in Mali and the prognosis for the immediate future shows no sign of abeyance. The terrorist incidents at the Turin and Al-Ghalwiyya border areas with Algeria and Mali increases Mauritania's vulnerability to terrorist threats from neighbouring countries where latent and active terror cells exist. For instance, the former Algerian cell of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, later the Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb claimed responsibility for the June 2005 and September 2008 and December 2007 as well as the September 2008 attacks in Mauritania.[20]

The need for sustained surveillance and sensitivity of the Government of Mauritania to terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in the country was reawakened by the escape of four prisoners held in the country's Central Prison in Nouakchott for acts of terrorism. On Monday 6 March 2023, Mauritania's Ministry of Interior announced that four terrorists escaped from the prison around 21:00hrs on Sunday, 5 March 2023 after exchange of gunfire in which two elements of the National Guard on duty were killed.[21] The four terrorists that escaped include Cheikh Ould Salek, a senior member of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Salek is a Mauritania national that was sentenced to death in 2011 for complicity in an AQIM plot to assassinate President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. Others are Mohamed Ould Chebih who was involved in

[19] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Interrogating the Scourge of Terrorism in North Africa" *African Political Science Review*, Volume 2, Number 1, 2010, pp. 96–110.

[20] "Mauritania: Terrorist attacks hit already-fragile economy" Refworld, accessed 27 June 2021, https://www.refworld.org/docid/48e085e00.html.

[21] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Algiers, "Mauritania: Terrorist Prison Attack and Jailbreak" *Preliminary Analysis*, ACSRT/PRE-REP/01/2023, 7 March 2023.

the 2005 terrorist attack in Mauritania, Muhammad Yeslim Muhammad Mahmoud and Abdul Karim Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq.[22] Like Cheih Ould Salek, Mohamed Ould Chebih was sentenced to death while Muhammad Yeslim Muhammad Mahmoud and Abdul Karim Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq were sentenced to 10 years and seven years imprisonment respectively.[23] Abdul Karim Abu Bar Al-Siddiq was sentenced to prison in 2021 for being complicit in trying to create a rally to commit terrorist crimes and also receive terrorist training abroad. Another implication of the jailbreak is that the national Government will now strengthen crackdown on suspected terrorists and extremist elements in the country while strengthening its commitments to regional counterterrorism engagements accordingly.

Official Response to Terrorism in Mauritania

Mauritania adopted a multi-dimensional approach involving soft and hard responses to tackling the terrorist threats in the country. This involves preventive measures targeted at addressing the conditions conducive for the emergence and spread of terrorism. Specifically, the Constitution of Mauritania prohibits any propaganda targeted to stimulate ethnic or racial discontent and rivalries. Therefore, Mauritania adopted the following symbolic and regulatory measures to uphold its territorial integrity and national identity:

a. Modification of the national flag with two red stripes symbolising the blood of the "martyrs of resistance" during the French colonial period.
b. International treaties and agreements can only be ratified by law. No changes to the territory can be made without the consent of the people.
c. Repression of domestic media that undermine the principle of territorial integrity.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

d. Sub-regional security diplomacy aimed at countering the spread of terrorism on its territory.[24]

In a report submitted to the United Nations Committee against Torture, the Government of Mauritania maintained that the challenge of terrorism in Mauritania was "well managed" and "was almost nonexistent in the country in the sense that there are no terrorist organisations in Mauritania."[25] In this report, prepared by the *Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Hommes* or International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the Mauritanian police arrested and detained several Mauritanians whom the Prime Minister labelled "Islamic terrorists financed by foreign countries from 22 May 2003 and insisted that those arrested constitutes a very real threat in the country."[26] Among those arrested are judges, the Director of the National Library, a former Ambassador, the Director of the Akraa Institute specialising in the professional training of students in Islamic schools and the Director of a charitable Non-Governmental Organisation from the United Arab Emirate (UAE). In addition, several women, including a professor and a researcher were also arrested without warrant and secretly detained incommunicado without being charged until they were all released in August 2003. Subsequent arrests and detentions of people, including opposition voices continued until 2 September 2005 when all of those detained, with the exception of Islamists, were granted amnesty by the new regime of *Conseil Militaire pour la Justice and Democratie* (CMJD).[27] This policy was deliberately pursued to send a clear message to terrorists that the Government of Mauritania will not condone any acts of terrorism.

Mauritania encouraged violent extremists to renounce terrorism and subscribe to the legitimate patterns of social order. For example, in September 2010, and after hearing the support from Islamic Clerics, President Aziz of Mauritania granted amnesty to Abdallahi Ould Mohammed

[24] Youssef Tobi and Youssef El Jai, "Morocco/Mauritania: Common Strategic Interests" in *Policy Centre for the New South Policy Brief, PN-20/03*, January 2020, p. 3.

[25] International Federation of Human Rights "Mauritania: The Case of the 'Islamists': Torture in the name of the Fight against Terrorism" International Fact-Finding Mission, No. 479/2—September 2007; accessed 27 June 2021, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/Mauritanie479ang.pdf.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

Sidiya and 34 other suspected terrorists accused of supporting the activities of Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[28] Abdallahi Sidiya was once ranked on Saudi Arabia's most wanted list.

Furthermore, Mauritania intensified its commitment to counterterrorism engagements by inaugurating a Commission to develop the country's national counterterrorism strategy in January 2010. In addition, the country also passed tougher anti-terrorism legislation that encouraged more aggressive use of the military to counter terrorism. As part of its counterterrorism measures, Mauritania issued Decree No. 127-2017, forming an office to manage frozen, seized and confiscated property and other criminal assets. Afterwards, the country established a National Committee to Combat Terrorism under Article 48 of Law 017-2019 with a mandate to set the procedures and measures necessary to implement the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution relating to terrorism.[29]

In April 2019, Mauritania's Central Bank shut down 691 money transfer offices for non-compliance with the 2005 legislation against money laundering and financing of terrorism.[30] In October 2019, Mauritania inaugurated the National Committee to Combat Money Laundering and the National Committee to Combat Terrorist Financing under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister's Senior Security Advisor. The Central Bank's Financial Information Analysis Commission (CANIF) was replaced with a new Financial Investigation Unit (FIU). Following the result of a National Risk Assessment (NRA) of Mauritania's Anti Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) risks in November 2019, the country decided to make the relevant information available to all AML/CFT stakeholders on NRA in order to help them increase their

[28] Scott Stearns, "Mauritania releases 35 suspected terrorists in End-of-Ramadan amnesty" Voice of America (VoA) News, accessed 6 August 2021, https://www.voanews.com/africa/mauritania-releases-35-suspected-terrorists-end-ramadan-amnesty.

[29] Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), "Second Enhanced Follow-up Report for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania TC Re-Rating Request Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism" November 2020, accessed 21 July 2021, https://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/content/images/MENAFATF-2nd-Enhanced-Follow-Up-Report-Islamic-Republic-Mauritania.pdf.

[30] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Mauritania" Op Cit.

compliance rates.[31] The Committee also collaborated with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) to organise and implement workshops and providing technical support to various stakeholder institutions. Such workshops are necessary to build capacities for effective policies and procedures of AML/CFT. Mauritania also promulgated Decree No. 197-2019 which spelled out the procedures for seizure, freezing, confiscation of proceeds, and nullification of activities associated with financing of terrorism.

From the ideological perspective, Mauritania's government encouraged the preaching of tradition of religious tolerance and accommodation among the citizens that discredited extremist appeals of terrorist groups. This strategy encouraged the involvement of certain approved Islamic clerics to engage detained extremists in conversations targeted at making them renounce extremist views in preference to mainstream narrative of religious tolerance. The Government also intensified the monitoring of Koranic schools, also known as Madras, to ensure that extremist narratives are not inculcated through the educational system. This measure was sustained with the recruitment of several former students of the Madras schools into the public sector as further protection from radicalisation.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education (MIATE) also developed and implemented more than 85 projects in Nouakchott and eastern regions of Mauritania under the Sadaqa programme. This project was extended to 2,500 beneficiaries in Nouakchott and eastern regions of Mauritania and was anchored on the adult literacy programme of the MIATE.[32] The core components of the Sadaqa programme were designed to address terrorism and violent extremism and included various training programmes on conflict mediation and risk factors associated with radicalisation, youth engagements and effective media and communications. The MIATE further established a centre for countering violent extremism (CVE) for the study and research on dimensions of terrorism at the University of Islamic Sciences in Aioun, Hodh el Gharbi region, in October 2019.[33] In addition, Mauritania's Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Youth including the MIATE collaborated with the Embassy of the United States in Nouakchott to develop

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

and implement a Youth Mediator for Peace Network drawing the 13 regional leaders that implemented various CVE projects in their respective regions.[34]

In terms of the engagement of defence and security organisations in counterterrorism operations, the Government of Mauritania intensified the procurement of new equipment and requisite training including enhanced welfare for its military and security agencies engaged in counterterrorism operations which included the payment of bonuses and substantial care for bereaved families.[35] A military zone was imposed in the northern area and special intervention groups were established to intensify surveillance and interceptions on the border frontiers. In addition, individuals and groups moving in the northern areas were ordered to carry legitimate identification documents as thorough security searches were conducted on all travellers, especially convoys. The Mauritania authorities also engaged in public awareness campaigns targeted at raising public support for the defence and security forces in the fight against terrorism.

The efficacy of Mauritania's defence and security forces in counterterrorism operations as well as the utility of community engagement in national security governance was demonstrated in the successful response to the jail break by four AQIM terrorists that escaped from a prison facility in Nouakchott. This operation consisted of personnel of the Mauritania Elite Unit of the National Gendarmerie supported by the First Commando Battalion and the Mauritania Military Aviation. It culminated in the killing of three of the escapee terrorists namely Cheikh Ould Salek, Muhammad Ould Chebih, and Muhammad Yeslim Muhammad Mahmoud. The fourth terrorism identified as Abu Bar Al-Sidiq Abdul Karim surrendered and was captured alive. The fleeing terrorists were intercepted in the Lamasidi region at a location which is 327 km in the northeast of Nouakchott on Saturday 11 March 2023 exactly six days after their escape from the central prison as they fled towards the borders with northern Mali through Al-Maddah on the outskirts of Adrar State which was an area previously patronised by trans-border smugglers. The fleeing terrorists were using a four-wheel drive Toyota Hilux (2018 model) which was registered in Mali alongside other supporting documents issued by

[34] Ibid.

[35] Kone, Op. Cit.

the Malian authorities. Items recovered from the vehicle comprised of three barrels of gasoline with capacity of 75 litres each, three barrels of water with capacity of 75 litres each, four mosquito nets, two large bags of sardines, some medications, 10 mobile phones, and 100 SIM cards belonging to 100 different companies.[36] The successful neutralisation of the escaped terrorists has apparently saved countries of the Sahel, especially Mali (which shares a long stretch of international borders) with Mauritania from the terror that could have emanated from them. It further served as a morale boost for Mauritania's defence and security forces that demonstrated their combat readiness and operational effectiveness in the discharge of their respective mandates thereby restoring the sense of national pride and public confidence in the Government.

As part of the counterterrorism offensive to recapture or neutralise the escapee prisoners, the security forces deployed a reconnaissance aircraft that transmitted real-time surveillance report to a Supreme Security Committee meeting in Nouakchott to complement the ground operation in pursuit of the fleeing terrorists. The eventual interception of the fleeing terrorists was facilitated by some members of the local population who suspected their movement and alerted security agencies as the terrorists who disguised as state officials were seeking guidance for locations to pick up communication signals and also procure other items.[37]

Beyond the engagement of defence and security forces in counterterrorism offensives, the Government of Mauritania also adopted a strategy creating new cities to take care of certain populations dispersed in remote areas such as Bouratt, Chami, Nbeiket, Termessa, and Lahwach which were previously used as a haven by terrorist groups for recruitment and training. The advantage of this strategy was bringing the previously dispersed population together in cities where basic services such as healthcare, schools, telecommunication, water, and electricity among others were made readily available thereby earning their loyalties to the Government while also delegitimizing the extremist appeals.

The overall effect of Mauritania's counterterrorism measures has been a decline, if not elimination of terrorist attacks inside Mauritania since

[36] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Algiers, "Mauritania Prison Terrorists Escapees Killed in Special Operation" *Preliminary Analysis*, ACSRT/PRE-REP/02/2023, 16 March 2023.

[37] Ibid.

2011. There however exists speculations that the success of counterterrorism engagements by the Government of Mauritania lies in an unofficial agreement between Mauritanian authorities and the jihadists in which the latter will refrain from attacking Mauritania in exchange for not attacking positions held by the terrorists.[38] Indications from the United States tend to support this speculation because documents retrieved from Osama Bin Laden's home in Abbottabad, Pakistan also point to the existence of such non-aggression pact purportedly adopted in 2010.[39] However, it should be noted that the existence of this unofficial agreement has been denied by Mauritanian officials.

International Cooperation

Mauritania recognises the importance of international cooperation in furthering its national interests and addressing shared regional and global problems such as combating terrorism and violent extremism. This understanding partly contributed to her membership of the African Union (AU), Arab League (AL), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) among others. Mauritania however severed links with the ECOWAS to join the AMU. However, following the escalation of terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel since 2011 and the inter-state rivalries crippling the already dysfunctional AMU, Mauritania reactivated its links with West Africa to strengthen her counterterrorism engagements. Consequently, Mauritania alongside Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Niger, is a member of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the French-led Operation Barkhane targeted at Counterterrorism and Counter Insurgency (CTCOIN) in West Africa and the Sahel. Troops of the G5 Sahel Joint Force periodically conduct joint operations with French forces deployed to the Sahel under Operation Barkhane. Each participating country contributes a battalion of 750 men and the troops capability of the force was designed to gradually increase to 10,000.[40] The G5 Sahel Group was established at the G5 Summit held in Bamako (Mali) on 2 July 2017 for the coordination and monitoring

[38] Ibid.

[39] Africa News, "Inside Mauritania's Winning Strategy against Sahel's terrorists" accessed 6 August 2021, https://www.africanews.com/2020/02/25/inside-mauritania-s-winning-strategy-against-sahel-terrorists//.

[40] Tobi and El Jai, Op. Cit., p. 4; Also see Florence Richard, "G5 in the Sahel: Macron launches joint anti-Jihadist force" *France 24*, 1 July 2017.

of regional efforts and facilitating better security arrangements among Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Membership in the FC-G5S is drawn from countries in Central Africa, North Africa and West Africa and it has the support of the United Nations, European Union, and strategic partners such as the United States and France.

The force headquarter of the G5 Sahel is located in Nouakchott which also hosts the G5 Sahel Defence College. In June 2019, the G5 Sahel Defence College graduated 36 mid-career military professionals including 16 from Mauritania and 20 other officers of which 5 were from each of the other West and Central African states constituting the G5 Sahel. In 2020, the military chiefs of the G5 Sahel countries agreed to permit defence forces of member states to pursue terrorists up to 100 km into the territories of signatory countries.[41] Mauritania also supports the Saudi-led Islamic Military Counterterrorism Coalition (IMCTC) that was formally launched in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 26 November 2017 as a "pan-Islamic coalition" of 41 predominantly Sunni Muslim which seeks to coordinate and multiply their individual efforts in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism.[42] The formation of this alliance was announced on 15 December 2015 by Saudi Defence Minister Mohammed bin Salman, two years ahead of the launching.[43] The IMCTC shall work together to support the military, financial, intelligence and political efforts of every member state to combat terrorism and extremist ideology.[44] This alliance will also combat terrorist groups in Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Syria including others that the coalition considers necessary.

[41] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Mauritania" United States Department of States, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/mauritania/ accessed 21 July 2021.

[42] Voice of America, "Saudi Launch Counterterrorism Coalition" accessed 20 November 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/saudi-launch-counterterror-coalition/4137107.html.

[43] Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee, "The Saudi-led Islamic Alliance: An Assessment" accessed 22 November 2021, https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=5090&lid=796.

[44] Deutsche Welle (DW), "Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance: Counterterrorism or Counter Iran?" accessed 20 November 2021, https://www.dw.com/en/saudi-led-islamic-military-alliance-counterterrorism-or-counter-iran/a-41538781.

Conclusion

Like other countries in the Sahel, Mauritania faces terrorist threats and attacks. So far, Mauritania has demonstrated significant resilience against terrorist infringement on its territory and has also demonstrated the capability to contain the terrorist challenges in a dangerous regional neighbourhood. However, Mauritania is not totally isolated from the multi-dimensional terrorist threats which are facilitated by porous borders of the Sahel-Saharan Strip (SSS) and the existence of several non-state armed groups (NSAGs) that resort to terrorist acts. Consequently, not only is it difficult to restore and maintain stability in the Sahel but also to totally eliminate terrorist threats confronting Mauritania.

Terrorist activity in Mauritania bolstered by terrorist groups in neighbouring Algeria and Mali as well as the involvement of Mauritanian nationals in terrorist activities in other countries of the Sahel. Porous borders in the SSS facilitate the activities of various terrorist organisations and Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). Therefore, regional and international cooperation is important for Mauritania to effectively combat the terrorist challenge. In light of the above, the imperative for sustained international actions in the fight against terrorism cannot be overemphasised. Such measures include the exchange of information and intelligence with its regional neighbours and the wider international community.

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CHAPTER 17

Understanding the Terrorist Threats in Morocco

Rohan Gunaratna and Rochelle Yen Ru Teo

Introduction

North Africa has been plagued by jihadism and political instability in recent years.[1] Surrounded by Algeria and Tunisia, Morocco is considered one of the more liberal Arab states. In 2020, Morocco was ranked 102nd by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) with a score of 0.565.[2] The GTI

[1] El Moussaoui El Ajlaoui, "Security Challenges and Issues in the Sahelo-Saharan Region: The Morocco Perspective," Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2016, https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fes-pscc/14022.pdf.

[2] "Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism," Institute for Economics & Peace, November 2020, https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf.

R. Gunaratna (✉) · R. Y. R. Teo
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: isrkgunaratna@ntu.edu.sg

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rates countries on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest measurable impact of terrorism and 0 being no impact.[3] The impact of terrorism in Morocco was thus considered to be very low. From 2003 to 2018, five terrorist attacks took place, with the deadliest in 2003 and the most recent in 2018.[4] This chapter therefore explores terrorism in Morocco, from covering a brief history of Morocco and its major terror attacks, to the terrorist groups operating in the area, before understanding the various reforms and changes undertaken by the Moroccan government in response to such terror attacks.

King Mohammed VI ascended the throne in 1999 following the death of his father, King Hassan II. Their ancestors in the Moroccan royal dynasty have ruled the country since 1649.[5] The Arab Spring in Morocco was influenced by youth-driven revolts in Tunisia and Egypt and took place between February 2011 and late 2012.[6] Young Moroccans organised demonstrations and rallies throughout the kingdom demanding for more democracy, anti-corruption measures, and social justice.[7] These protests eventually led to liberalisation reform changes in the Kingdom. To bring about liberalisation, King Mohammed VI successfully enacted women's rights legislation which raised the minimum age of marriage to 19 and gave women the right to initiate a divorce.[8] Another noteworthy reform implementation was the creation of a human rights organisation

[3] Ibid.

[4] Mehdi Lahlou and Mounir Zouiten, "Radicalisation and Resilience Case Study: Morocco," Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives, September 2020, http://grease.eui.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/01/WP4-Report_Morocco.pdf.

[5] Alexis Arieff, "Morocco: Current Issues," Congressional Research Service, February 23, 2011, https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20110223_RS21579_b294ade82a4f217ab3fdcb6eb80d553fe474eb21.pdf.

[6] James N. Sater, "Morocco's 'Arab' Spring," Middle East Institute, October 1, 2011, https://www.mei.edu/publications/moroccos-arab-spring.

[7] Leni Brouwer and Edien Bartels, "Arab Spring in Morocco: social media and the 20 February movement," *Afrika Focus* 27, no. 2 (2014): 9-22.

[8] Anouar Boukhars, "Political Violence in North Africa: The Perils of Incomplete Liberalization," *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper* no. 3 (January 2011).

to investigate sensitive violations such as torture, murders, and disappearances that the Moroccan state had been accused of under the rule of King Hassan II.[9]

Despite these forward steps towards liberalisation, some blamed these steps as the cause for the rise of radical Muslim organisations during this period.[10] Moroccan political scientist, Mohamed Tozy, stated that the dismissal of Interior Minister Driss Basri along with the removal of security officers and police prefects in November 1999 could have undermined Morocco's capability to steer clear of extremism.[11] Belaala, a scholar of North African Islamic movements, elaborated that the removal of these repressive elements without any adaptation or reform to the security network, allowed for the followers of *takfiri* ideology to gather and link with international networks.[12]

Apart from the removal of the security network, extremism and terrorism in Morocco can be traced back to Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia and Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) from Egypt. During 1980s to 1990s, Wahhabism was promoted instead of the popular al-Adl wal-Ihsan movement, which was meant to strengthen the king's religious position as "Commander of the Faithful".[13] Introduced under the guise of a puritanical view of Islam, Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood challenged the stability and security of Morocco. Both organisations' intolerance of the other contributed to the rising wave of extremism damaging the local and traditional Moroccan Islamic teaching towards Jews and women.[14] In an attempt to establish an Islamic State (IS) legally, the Brotherhood spread its ideology in Morocco and in other Arab states. While remaining underground, the Brotherhood also influenced

[9] Dalia Dassa Kaye, Frederic Wehrey, Audra K. Grant and Dale Stahl, "Morocco," in *More Freedom, Less Terror?: Liberalization and Political Violence in the Arab World*, (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: Rand Corporation, 2008), 143-162.

[10] Boukhars, "Political Violence in North Africa."

[11] Mohamed Tozy, "Nouveau règne ou nouveau régime: les enjeux de la succession," *Les Cahiers de l'Orient, Paris*, 2000.

[12] Selma Belaala, "Morocco: Slums breed jihad," *Le Monde diplomatique*, November 2004, https://mondediplo.com/2004/11/04moroccoislamists.

[13] Alison Pargeter, "Uncovering Extremist Violence in Morocco," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 8 (July 2008).

[14] Anneli Botha, "Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalisation of Domestic Terrorism," *ISS Monograph Series* no. 144 (June 2008).

several other groups including Jam'yya al-Ba'th al-Islami (Association of Islamic Resurrection), a Salafist organisation, advocating Islam as the only solution.

Morocco's Diplomatic Relations with Israel

Morocco is the fourth country in the Middle East to approve of diplomatic ties with Israel, suggesting that the state is willing to set aside its fears of Islamist retaliation from Muslim-majority countries for strategic gains.[15] The main strategic gain includes the United States recognising Morocco's sovereignty of the Western Sahara. However, this would mean going against the UN resolution that gives the indigenous Sahrawi people and the Polisario Front claims to the Western Sahara.[16] Over 100,000 people have fled from the conflict and repression in the Western Sahara which was annexed by Morocco in 1975, which triggered a conflict between the Moroccan government and rebels that ended with a ceasefire mediated by the UN in 1991.[17] This truce designated the Western Sahara as a "Non-Self-Governing Territory" with neither Morocco nor the Polisario Front Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic claiming sovereignty over the region.[18] However, with the United States holding veto power in the UN Security Council, there remains little hope for a referendum to take place which would affect the potential retaliation from the Polisario Front.[19] Lovatt and Mundy from the European Council on Foreign Relations, urged for the relaunch of a practical UN-led peace process.[20]

[15] Syed Huzaifah bin Othman Alkaff, "Ties with Israel: Indonesia Not Like Morocco," *RSIS Commentary*, January 12, 2021, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/ties-with-israel-indonesia-not-like-morocco/.

[16] Sudarsan Raghavan, "U.S. recognition of Morocco's claim over disputed region threatens more tension," *The Washington Post*, December 11, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/western-sahara-morocco-israel-trump/2020/12/11/cd4176b2-3b81-11eb-aad9-8959227280c4_story.html.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Joseph Stepansky, "*Why Biden's Western Sahara policy remains under review*," Al Jazeera, 13 June 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/13/why-biden-administration-and-western-sahara

[19] Ibid.

[20] Hugh Lovatt and Jacob Mundy, "*Free to choose: A new plan for peace in Western Sahara*," 26 May 2021, https://ecfr.eu/publication/free-to-choose-a-new-plan-for-peace-in-western-sahara/.

Returning Foreign Fighters

Morocco witnessed two waves of returning foreign fighters. The first wave was caused by Moroccans who travelled to Afghanistan to participate in the Soviet-Afghan war during the 1980s.[21] Due to Morocco's Cold War alliances with the West, the Kingdom allowed volunteers who wanted to fight jihad, to travel to Afghanistan and other battlefields.[22] As such, these fighters were granted a return. The second wave was with Islamic State (IS) returnees. Of the 1,645 Moroccans that joined IS and al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria and Iraq, 745 died in battle or suicide attacks.[23] The fighter families included 288 women and 391 minors and while most fought for the IS, 270 returned to Morocco and 137 were prosecuted. After the 9/11 attacks in the United States, Morocco realised the imminent threat of extremism and began to actively seek out these veterans.[24]

Although the returnees presented a challenge, the bigger extremism challenge was from Moroccans living in Morocco radicalised by IS propaganda. These foreign fighters could return to spread their extremist ideologies and adversely influence others, even though they were small in numbers and were unable to form a group which could launch attacks and be able to challenge the monarchy.[25] However, the Moroccan intelligence services are active in cooperating with European countries, such as France and Spain, in countering terrorism. The Moroccan intelligence service provided reliable information to facilitate the identification of the coordinator behind the Paris attack in 2015.[26] Moreover, Morocco had since updated their punishments to include imprisonment and fines for

[21] Kathya Kenza Berrada, "*Dealing with Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Insights from the Moroccan Experience*," European Eye on Radicalization, March 25, 2020, https://eeradicalization.com/dealing-with-returning-foreign-terrorist-fighters-insights-from-the-moroccan-experience/

[22] Pargeter, "Uncovering Extremist Violence in Morocco."

[23] "Morocco sees security threat in Sahel extremist groups," *The Arab Weekly*, March 3, 2021, https://thearabweekly.com/morocco-sees-security-threat-sahel-extremist-groups.

[24] Pargeter, "Uncovering Extremist Violence in Morocco."

[25] Ibid.

[26] Kathya Kenza Berrada, *"Dealing with Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Insights from the Moroccan Experience,"* European Eye on Radicalization, March 25, 2020, https://eeradicalization.com/dealing-with-returning-foreign-terrorist-fighters-insights-from-the-moroccan-experience/.

Moroccans who join or attempt to join any non-state armed organisation.[27] This emphasises the government's continued efforts to detect and deter future attacks.

Summary of Major Terror Attacks in Morocco

The peak of the threat in Morocco occurred during the 1990s and 2000s due to the proliferation of al-Qaeda-centric threat groups and ideology. Moroccan and Algerian terrorists shot dead two Spanish tourists, and injured a third as well as a Moroccan woman, in the Atlas-Asni hotel in Marrakesh on 24 August 1994. These terrorists were trained by a French cell led by an Afghan veteran of Moroccan heritage. The same network in Morocco had attacked a McDonalds in Casablanca in 1993. After Morocco imposed a visa requirement for visiting Algerians, there were attacks by Algerian terrorists including one that resulted in the deaths of 10 Moroccans near the border town of Oujda.[28] Three other major attacks in Morocco are further detailed.

Casablanca Bombing in 2003

The most devastating attack in the history of Morocco was on 16 May 2003 which left 45 people dead including the 12 suicide bombers, and 100 injured. The blasts occurred at a Jewish cemetery, a Jewish-owned Italian restaurant next to the Belgian consulate, Israeli alliance community centre, Farah Hotel, and Casa de Espana restaurant.[29] The targets of the attack suggest that the goal was to destroy symbols of Morocco's modernity and religious tolerance.[30] By choosing targets which were associated with Jewish heritage and culture, it was clear that the terrorists attacked what they deemed to be an enemy of Muslims.[31]

[27] Ibid.

[28] Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Chronologies of Modern Terrorism* (Routledge, 2009).

[29] Botha, "Terrorism in the Maghreb."

[30] Ibid.

[31] Rogelio Alonso and Marcos García Rey, "The Evolution of Jihadist Terrorism in Morocco," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 4 (October 2007): 571–592.

The Casablanca attack was an example of religious extremism, threatening tourism and the harmonious coexistence with the Jewish community. It revealed the contempt which Morocco's population has towards Israel due to their actions towards Palestine, and it was also this anti-Semitism that acted as a key component in the indoctrination process of a jihadist.[32] This was the event which served as a reminder to the state that terrorism was an issue that should not be overlooked. The idea that Moroccans were shielded from Islamist militancy due to the monarchy's claimed descent from Prophet Mohammed was shattered after the attacks.[33] In a bid to ramp up counterterrorism efforts in Morocco, more than 2,000 radicals were arrested after this attack.[34] The state dismantled terrorist networks which threatened Morocco, and those which recruited foreign fighters in Iraq.[35]

Marrakesh Bombing in 2011

On 28 April 2011, a remote bomb was detonated and killed 17 people of which most were foreign nationals. The bomb exploded in the Argana cafe at Jamaa el-Fnaa square which was next to a historic market area in Marrakesh, where it drew thousands of tourists' visits. This attack, executed in a major tourist hot spot, indicates an intention to damage the tourism industry, which constitutes Morocco's primary source of revenue and foreign investment.[36] Before the attack, a video posted on YouTube portrayed men who claimed to be Moroccan members of al-Qaeda's North African wing threatening to avenge the detained Islamists.[37] It was

[32] Ibid.

[33] Arieff, "Morocco;" Anthony Dworkin and Fatim-Zohra El Malki, "The Southern Front line: EU Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with Tunisia and Morocco," European Council on Foreign Relations, February 15, 2018, https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/the_southern_front_line_eu_counter_terrorism_cooperation.pdf.

[34] Lahlou and Zouiten, "Radicalisation and Resilience Case Study: Morocco."

[35] Botha, "Terrorism in the Maghreb."

[36] Ibid.

[37] Youssef Boudlal, "Bomb attack in Morocco tourist cafe kills 15," *Reuters*, April 28, 2011, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-blast-idUSTRE73R39T20110428.

subsequently discovered that the mastermind behind the attack was Adel al-Othmani, who was reportedly inspired by al-Qaeda and had planted the bomb in the cafe before setting it off with his mobile device.[38] He was thereafter handed a death sentence, while his accomplices were only made to serve time.

Beheading of Two Scandinavian Hikers in 2018

The most recent terror attack in Morocco involved two women, Maren Ueland and Louisa Vesterager Jespersen, whose bodies were found near Mount Toubkal on 17 December 2018. The assailants were Abdessamad Ejjoud, Younes Ouaziyad, and Rachid Afatti, who have since been sentenced to death in Morocco.[39] These men were IS sympathisers who pledged their allegiance as seen in a video posted before the killings on social media.[40] It was further reported that Ejjoud and Ouaziyad had stabbed the women and cut their necks, while Afatti had videoed the process.[41] The video depicting the attack was also posted online. A fourth man, Abderahman Khayali, was only given a life sentence as he had left before the killings took place.

Terrorist Groups in Morocco

Two main terrorist groups in Morocco are the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) and Salafiya Jihadiya (SJ).

[38] "Moroccan court hands down harsher sentences for cafe bombers," *France 24*, March 10, 2012, https://www.france24.com/en/20120310-morocco-al-qaeda-marrakech-bomb-cafe-french-tourist.

[39] Rut Maclean, "Moroccan court orders death penalty for jihadists who beheaded tourists," *The Guardian*, July 18, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/18/moroccan-court-orders-death-penalty-for-jihadists-who-beheaded-tourists.

[40] Aida Alami, "3 Sentenced to Death for Killing Scandinavian Hikers in Morocco," *The New York Times*, July 18, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/18/world/africa/scandinavian-hikers-morocco.html.

[41] Maclean, "Moroccan court orders death penalty for jihadists who beheaded tourists."

Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)

The GICM is a Sunni Islamist militant organisation established in the 1990s which operates in North Africa and Western Europe.[42] The acronym originates from the French translation, *Groupe Islamique Combattante Marocain*. Members of the Salafi-jihadi oriented GICM sought to wage a global jihad and to establish a fundamentalist Islamic government in Morocco.[43] GICM has ties with al-Qaeda by supporting operatives to assimilate into European and Moroccan societies.[44] This was evident as Abdelkarim el-Mejjati was a leader at al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia, and he was involved in creating GICM.[45] This militant group recruited Mujahideen who were trained and fought in Afghan camps.[46] Besides terrorism, GICM also engaged in drug trafficking, gunrunning, and document forgery, particularly in Western Europe.[47] However, in 2010, it was reported by the US State Department that most of GICM's leaders had either been killed or imprisoned.[48] GICM had been found to be involved in both the 2003 Casablanca bombings, as well as the 2004 Madrid bombings.[49]

Salafiya Jihadiya

While not much concrete information is available, *Salafiya Jihadiya* (SJ) is believed to be one of the largest in Morocco. Evident in its name and similar to GICM, this group practises Salafi-jihadism. Some believe it to consist of several groups (including Moroccan Afghans, Takfir wal-Hijra),

[42] Mapping Militant Organizations, "Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group," Stanford University, July 2018, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/moroccan-islamic-combatant-group#:~:text=The%20Moroccan%20Islamic%20Combatant%20Group,North%20Africa%20and%20Western%20Europe.

[43] Ibid.

[44] "Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group," United Nations Security Council, December 14, 2009, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/moroccan-islamic-combatant-group.

[45] Carlos Echeverría Jesús, "The Current State of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 3 (March 2009).

[46] Kaye, Wehrey, Grant and Stahl, "Morocco."

[47] Jesús, "The Current State of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group."

[48] Arieff, "Morocco."

[49] "Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group."

while others think that it may be an arbitrary label used by the Moroccan government.[50] Whichever the case, SJ and Takfir wal-Hijra were found to be responsible for seeking Islamic justice and murdering approximately 300 people in Morocco for non-Islamic behaviours.[51] Additionally, some members of SJ were accused of being involved in the 2003 Casablanca bombings and 2004 Madrid bombings as well.[52] Despite both GICM and SJ's involvement in these two attacks, the relationship between them remains unclear.

Threat Response in Morocco

The 2003 Casablanca bombings shattered the idea that the country's monarchy rendered it immune to Islamist extremism. Since then, the Moroccan government has actively begun to reform their current counterterrorism measures and policies. The following section will discuss these changes in detail.

New Legislation

The Moroccan government passed new counterterrorism legislation two weeks after the incident, broadening the definition of terrorism in the process. The new definition of terrorism included incitement and activities which shows one's support to the cause.[53] This resulted in more severe sentences for related offences while greater power was given to the security services. This power included wiretapping, seizure of property used in terrorism, and a 12-day detention period of the suspect without being able to contact their lawyers.[54] This new legislation led to the mass arrests of those who had even the slightest connection to extremism. The efficacy of the law was displayed through the dismantling of terror cells

[50] Kaye, Wehrey, Grant and Stahl, "Morocco."

[51] Blake D. Ward, "Osama's Wake: The Second Generation of Al Qaeda," USAF Counterproliferation Center Future Warfare Series no. 32 (August 2005).

[52] Ibid.

[53] Jack Kalpakian, "Current Moroccan Anti-Terrorism Policy," Fundación Real Instituto Elcano, May 13, 2011, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/international+terrorism/ari89-2011.

[54] Ibid; Alonso and Rey, "The Evolution of Jihadist Terrorism in Morocco."

and the seizing of arms destined for terror use by the government. In addition, Morocco collaborated with the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), part of the FATF which is a global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, to thwart the financing of terrorists.[55] Morocco had also criminalised terrorism financing, to meet with international standards after being prompted by the FATF.[56] As such, new anti-money laundering laws were passed to freeze accounts of suspects, prosecute terrorist financing, as well as reduce bank secrecy.[57]

The state also launched Operation Hadar (Arabic for "vigilance"), a nationwide surveillance campaign that consists of members of the Royal Armed Forces, Royal Gendarmerie, the police and auxiliary forces.[58] The goal of Operation Hadar was to prevent extremists who were trained abroad from re-entering the country, and to patrol cities and important sites to protect civilians.[59] This led to the heightened security at train stations, airports, and borders to monitor for suspicious activities.[60]

Bureau Central d'Investigation Judiciaire (BCJI)

The Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations or BCJI has since its formation in 2015 uncovered 183 terrorist cells, arrested more than 3,000 individuals, and prevented over 300 terrorist attacks.[61] This newly

[55] Eric V. Thompson and Will McCants, "Partners Against Terror: Opportunities and Challenges for U.S.-Moroccan Counterterrorism Cooperation," CNA Analysis & Solutions, https://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CNAUSMoroccoCTCooperation.pdf.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Alonso and Rey, "The Evolution of Jihadist Terrorism in Morocco."

[58] Abderrahmane Naji, "Morocco and the threats of terrorism," Wall Street International Magazine, July 17, 2015, https://wsimag.com/economy-and-politics/16047-morocco-and-the-threats-of-terrorism.

[59] Erica Vásquez, "Morocco's Counterterrorism Strategy: Implications for Western Sahara," Middle East Institute, August 13, 2015, https://www.mei.edu/publications/moroccos-counterterrorism-strategy-implications-western-sahara#_ftn1.

[60] Ibid.

[61] James B. Cogbill, "America First ≠ America Alone: Morocco as Exemplar for U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy," Washington Headquarters Services Joint Force Quarterly 95, November 18, 2019, https://www.whs.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2018975/america-first-america-alone-morocco-as-exemplar-for-us-counterterrorism-strategy/.

formed security group is the primary law enforcement agency responsible for counterterrorism and has been dubbed the Moroccan FBI by the media.[62] They consist of specially trained individuals specialising in legal matters, while operating under the watch of the public prosecutor of the court of appeals.[63] Despite the success of this security unit, it has drawn attention from human rights organisations that deem the Moroccan criminal justice system as falling short in meeting international standards.[64] The BCIJ had been accused of torture and abuse of inmates in the Moroccan detention centres.[65]

Economic Reforms

A study by Ennaji, an academic from Morocco, revealed that the main reason for Moroccans joining a terrorist group is due to economic reasons.[66] It was found that while the average Moroccan earns less than $200 a month, the typical pay of an IS fighter is $1,400.[67] As such, King Mohammed VI started the National Human Development Initiative (NHDI) which has invested more than $6 billion in the first 10 years and served at least 7 million individuals, and even includes projects which sponsor women and youth.[68] The goal of the NHDI was to combat poverty, promote social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, and create

[62] Assia Bensalah Alaoui, "Morocco's Security Strategy: Preventing Terrorism and Countering Extremism," *European View* 16, no. 1 (June 2017): 103-120.

[63] Ibid; Cogbill, "America First ≠ America Alone."

[64] Alonso and Rey, "The Evolution of Jihadist Terrorism in Morocco."

[65] Luke Tyson, "Moroccan Sheikh Responds to Allegations of Torture in Moroccan Prisons," *Morocco World News*, March 4, 2021, https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2021/03/336602/moroccan-sheikh-responds-to-allegations-of-torture-in-moroccan-prisons/.

[66] Moha Ennaji, "Recruitment of foreign male and female fighters to Jihad: Morocco's multifaceted counter-terror strategy," *International Review of Sociology* 26, no. 3 (2016): 546–557.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ahmed Charai, "Morocco's Role in Supporting Human Development in Africa," *Huffpost*, May 25, 2015, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/moroccos-role-in-supporti_b_7434738.

jobs. By enhancing social cohesion, the NHDI hopes to prevent these disadvantaged groups from choosing violence as a means to an end.[69]

For example, the suicide bomber in Casablanca and Marrakesh attacks came from the slums and shanty towns around the city of Casablanca.[70] This fueled the Moroccan authorities' belief that the incidence of poverty increased communities vulnerability to terrorism. As such, the programme "2004–2010 Cities without Slums" was created to improve living conditions for those in poverty with the aim to remove or upgrade Morocco's slums by 2010.[71] Despite achieving some success, the National Observatory of Human Development found that middle-class households benefited the most from the NHDI instead of the poorest households.[72] This suggests that the programme might not have been able to attain its main objective.

Religious Reforms

In the past, Imams were encouraged to study at universities in Saudi Arabia and were favoured over those who were trained at the main institute for religious learning in Morocco, Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania, for imams in the Maliki tradition to teach Islamic studies.[73] Some returning radical preachers such as Hassan Kettani and Mohamed Fizazi made an impact in breeding the rejectionist ideology which challenged the king's political and religious legitimacy.[74] The lack of implementation of policies and legislations to curb the spread of extremist ideology in Morocco contributed to the rise and formation of threats in the country.

[69] Chikhaoui Naïma, "WHO-Rabat-Morocco," World Health Organization, September 28, 2007, https://www.who.int/social_determinants/resources/isa_mar.pdf.

[70] Sami Zemni an Koenraad Bogaert, "Urban renewal and social development in Morocco in an age of neoliberal government," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 129 (August 2011): 403–417.

[71] Matthew Chebatoris, "Morocco's Multi-Pronged Counterterrorism Strategy," Terrorism Monitor 7, no. 13 (March 2009).

[72] R.A. Neefjes, "Counterterrorism Policy in Morocco" (unpublished master's thesis, Utrecht University, 2017).

[73] Pargeter, "Uncovering Extremist Violence in Morocco."

[74] Ibid.

To prevent the further perpetuation of violent Islamist extremist ideologies, a national strategy to reform religious matters was implemented. The Ministry of Religious Affairs was tasked to create two new departments—the Department of Mosques and Department for Traditional Education. These departments are responsible for supervising mosques and hiring imams, and supervising the content taught in religious education respectively.[75] Moreover, the state took further actions to reform the religious sector. Firstly, a restructure in the curriculum at Dar al-Hadith al-Hassania occurred, with imams being required to study other non-religious subjects.[76] Secondly, research centres were established and feminization of the religious field in Morocco materialised as well, allowing women to be admitted to the Supreme Ulema Council, an authority that has the power to oversee religion related matters and issue fatwas.[77]

International Cooperation

Morocco is a dedicated player in the international scene and has signed both regional and international pacts in the fight against terrorism. Since April 2016, Morocco co-chairs the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) along with the Netherlands. Through the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) programme, the United States has since been an ally. The partnership provides training to Moroccan authorities with training in areas such as post-blast investigations, crime scene forensics, and even investigating terrorist incidents.[78] The Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is also another US initiative which Morocco is part of counter violent extremism in the Maghreb and Sahel region. Morocco

[75] Nathan J. Brown, *"Official Islam in the Arab World: The Contest for Religious Authority,"* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 11, 2017, https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/11/official-islam-in-arab-world-contest-for-religious-authority-pub-69929.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2015: The Middle East and North Africa," U.S. Department of State, 2015, https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257517.htm.

is also focused on maritime counterterrorism exercises such as Phoenix Express and Flintlock which are regional security exercises.[79]

Prison Deradicalisation Programme

The Moussalaha ('reconciliation') deradicalisation programme was a collaborative effort between the General Delegation for Prison Administration and Reintegration, National Council for Human Rights and Mohammedia League for Scholars launched in 2016.[80] The goal of the programme has been to rehabilitate terrorists who subscribed to the Salafi ideology through a three-pronged approach of reconciliation with the self, with religious texts, and lastly with society.[81] Spanning over a period of four months, the programme includes theological teachings, psychological counselling, and reintegration into society through lectures and workshops.[82] However, this programme is not without its limitations. Firstly, participants of this programme are individuals who have expressed their willingness to renounce jihadism.[83] These individuals make up only a small fraction of those currently incarcerated and this self-selection of participants poses difficulty in gaining reliable feedback on the programme's effectiveness. Secondly, there is a lack of continuity after the incarceration period.[84] One problem faced by the beneficiaries of the programme is the difficulty of reintegrating with mainstream society due to social stigma. A more well-rounded de-radicalisation programme should include additional support in the form of continuous dialogues

[79] Ibid.

[80] Mohammed Masbah and Souad Ahmadoun, "Morocco's Failure to Reintegrate Former Jihadis.".

[81] Ibid.

[82] Kathya Kenza Berrada, "Morocco's response to foreign terrorist fighters: Tighter security and deradicalisation," in *Returnees in the Maghreb: Comparing policies on returning foreign terrorist fighters in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia*, ed. Thomas Renard (Egmont Institute, April 2019), 24-35.

[83] Mohammed Masbah and Souad Ahmadoun, "Morocco's Failure to Reintegrate Former Jihadis.".

[84] Berrada, "Morocco's response to foreign terrorist fighters.".

with credible religious leaders, psychological counselling, and vocational training even after the completion of the programme.[85]

Conclusion

Morocco is a stable country in comparison to other countries of the Maghreb due to its visionary rulers and powerful security and intelligence services. The rulers are the descendants of the Prophet and perform their role as Commander of the Faithful (*amir ul mukminin*) carrying significant influence among the Moroccans and beyond. King Mohammed VI countered the rising wave of Salafism by developing programmes to train clerics, banning extremist literature including books promoting hatred, and removing textbook passages promoting violence.

However, unlike in neighbouring countries, King Hassan II ruled with an iron fist controlling the returnees from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Kosovo, and other conflict zones, especially Iraq and Syria.[86]. The security and intelligence community has also managed the threat in Morocco by preventing terrorists from targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets, shopping malls, and local government facilities. Morocco has employed a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy that includes vigilant security measures, regional and international cooperation, and counter-radicalization policies. Nonetheless, Morocco experienced attacks in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2018, and 2022. In the January 2022 attack, the terrorist killed a French woman in Tiznit and wounded a Belgian woman with a knife in Agadir. What is important is to shift from counter terrorism cooperation to collaboration and partnership to monitor Moroccan foreign fighters. As over 1,600 Moroccan nationals traveled to conflict zones to fight alongside Islamist groups, the returnees should be rehabilitated. In addition to returnees from Syria, Iraq, and Libya, Moroccan security services should monitor those currently in sub Saharan Africa. Away from the public glare, Morocco's General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance (DGST) and Directorate of National Security (DGSN) are fighting the threat every day. Since 2002, Moroccan security forces neutralized 2,000 terror cells and 3,500 suspects mostly

[85] Mohammed Masbah and Souad Ahmadoun, "Morocco's Failure to Reintegrate Former Jihadis.".

[86] Botha, "Terrorism in the Maghreb.".

driven by the ideology of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. In addition to securing clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, movie theaters, and public gatherings, Western, Israeli and Jewish interests need to be protected.

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CHAPTER 18

Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Tunisia

Miriam Shafik

Introduction

Tunisia has been a centre of varied colonial experiences including the Phoenicians (as early as the twelfth century B.C.), the Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, various Arab and Berber kingdoms, and the Ottomans (sixteenth to late nineteenth centuries). The rivalry between French and Italian interests in Tunisia culminated in the French invasion of 1881, and the creation of a protectorate.[1] Throughout the nineteenth century, Tunisia underwent several social and political reforms, mainly influenced by the French and Italian invasions. Although such reforms were initiated and encouraged by several Ottoman rulers of Tunisia, they found little acceptance among the public due to their conflict with the grassroots of the Islamic and Arab identity. Tunisians struggle to preserve their original Islamic identity and cope with radical modern and liberal

[1] The World Factbook—CIA; https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tunisia/.

M. Shafik (✉)
Valletta, Malta
e-mail: miriam.shafik85@gmail.com

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reforms enforced by several governing regimes was the main push factor for the emergence of the radical Islamism movement in Tunisia.

In 1956, Tunisia attained political independence from France with Habib Bourquiba, who at the time was serving as the leader of the Neo-Destour (New Constitution) Party, emerged as its first Prime Minister. Being a strong advocate of western civilisation and liberalism, Bourquiba enacted a series of socio-political reforms in Tunisia which brought conflicts and misunderstandings with his opponents and once allies, the Zaytona University Students (aka. The Zaytounians).[2] Bourquiba insisted that the religious establishment in Tunisia had failed to adapt Islam to the needs of modern life.[3] Following his ascendancy to power, Bourquiba started eliminating perceived, real and potential threats, mainly the Arab-nationalist camp and his partner in the Neo-Destour Party, Salah Bin Youssef, whom he ordered his execution in 1961. Additionally, he dismantled the religious establishment, a strategy that alienated the conservatives and triggered the emergence of a more politicised Islam. Cautious of Tunisia falling into the hands of the conservative religious establishment, he started replacing its leaders with more liberal ulama (thinkers) who would also be loyal to him and believers of his socio-political agenda.[4]

Era of Ennahda

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bourquiba's aggressive plan to diminish and dismantle the Islamic culture of Tunisia to further his secularisation plan triggered a rebellion among conservative Tunisians. His efforts included dismantling the religious establishment, changing the educational system to French and sidelining the Arab language, establishing a new secular University and turning the Zaytona University into a Faculty of Shari'a and Theology under the umbrella of the new University. This change created a huge concern among conservatives in Tunisia, as the new University recruited only French teachers who utilised French

[2] The Zaytouna University is the oldest Islamic University in the Arab and Islamic world, even older than the proclaimed al-Azhar in Egypt. At the time of Bourguiba, it was mainly the only University in Tunisia and only taught Islamic studies and Arabic.

[3] Wolf, Anne; "Political Islam in Tunisia: *The History of Ennahda*"; Oxford University Press 2017; p. 23.

[4] Ibid., p. 25.

as the language of instruction. This measure left Zaytouna graduates (who only studied in Arabic) with fewer opportunities to further their careers or studies in Tunisia. Among them is Rachid al Ghannoushi who later became leader of the Ennahda Party.

Habib Bourquiba was also the first political leader in the region that abolished the Shari'a courts and the traditional gender legislation, replacing them with the Personal Status Code, a pioneering code bolstering women's rights and shaped more towards French civil law. The code clashed with deeply rooted Shari'a principles, mainly prohibiting polygamy, establishing a minimum age for marriage and requiring consent from both parties to complete the marriage. Additionally, it abolished the wife's obligation to obey her husband and gave women equal financial and social rights to their male spouse in case of divorce.

After changing century-long traditions of Islamic teachings, he sought to remove several religious practices considered part of the five pillars of Islam, including fasting in the holy month of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca.[5] However, Bourquiba was cautious enough to use Islamic justification for his reforms, reasoning that fasting is not required in times of jihad. Consequently, he labelled his reforms as "jihad against underdevelopment" thereby providing the religious narrative for non-fasting.

Bourquiba's plan of secularism coincided with three other factors that contributed heavily to the politicisation of Islam. First, the spread of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology and literature across the region, mainly the publications of Hassan al Banna and Sayyid Qutb in the late 1960s, contributed significantly to the expansion of Islam. These publications gained popularity among the young generations eager to learn more about their abandoned Islamic and Arab identities. Second, the rise and success of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 gave Islamists in Tunisia and other parts of the Islamic world the confidence and aspiration that Islam can be a political model more than a socio-cultural activity. Third, was the rise of the student body at University campuses, where the far left clashed with the religious bloc.

[5] Yadh Ben Achour, "Islam perdu, Islam retrouve," Anuaire de l'Afrique du Nord (1979), p. 68.

Al Jama'a Al-Islamiyya

In the 1960s, Bourguiba started seeing the vocal far left as his main enemy and implemented an aggressive crackdown on their different parties. At its outset, the conflict between the government and leftists pushed the conservative Tunisians to practice religion in the private sphere and underground communities. In the second phase, the community was drawn to new propaganda of al Jama'a al-Islamiyya (J.I) also known as the Islamic Group that was, founded by three fundamentalists namely, Rachid Ghannouchi, Abdelfatah Morou, and Hamida Ennaifer.

Following its three founders' trajectories, a lot can be learned about the J.I. For instance, Ghannouchi came from a conservative family in a rural town in the Gabes governorate and was educated at Zaytouna University. Upon moving to Tunis, Ghannouchi was struck by the contradiction between the liberalism of Tunis and his traditional upbringing.[6] Due to Bourquiba's educational reforms, Ghannouchi had limited opportunities to pursue his education in Tunisia, forcing him to seek refuge in Egypt. Additionally, Ghannouchi admired Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser for his pan-Arab and nationalist policies and his opposition to the West and Bourquiba at the time.[7] After securing a spot at the Cairo University in Egypt, Ghannouchi and a few other Tunisians were expelled as soon as Tunisia normalised relations with Egypt.[8] The Tunisian embassy in Cairo asked the Egyptian authorities to expel the new group as it was considered a threat to the Tunisian regime. In response, Ghannouchi fled Egypt to Syria, where he started his first encounter with political Islam through the Pakistani Tabligh we Al Da'wa group. Although Ghannouchi's original conviction started from the principles of nationalism, being persecuted by nationalist-claiming regimes and introduced to the Pakistani' group, he shifted away from nationalism believing it contradicted Islamism. In his August 2012 interview with Anne Wolf, a research fellow at Cambridge University and author of *Political Islam in Tunisia: The History of Ennahda*, Ghannouchi identified September 1966 as the turning point of his orientation. The defeat of Egypt by Israel in the 1967 war and the accompanying loss of territories by Egypt, Jordan,

[6] Wolf, Anne; "Political Islam in Tunisia: *the History of Ennahda*"; Oxford University Press 2017; p. 32.

[7] Anne Wolf interview with Rachid Ghannouchi, Tunis, August 2012.

[8] Ibid.

and Syria, including parts of the Gaza strip, to the State of Israel was another historical incident that reinforced the beliefs of Ghannouchi and several other young Arab students in the affairs of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This incident served as a catalyst for the Islamic resurgence in the entire region, including Tunisia.

After Syria, Ghannouchi moved to Paris to pursue his postgraduate studies, where he met Hamida Ennaifer, who also was studying at the Sorbonne at the same time. Ennaifer came from an influential Tunis family that yielded scholars amongst the reformist wing of the religious establishment. During his time in Paris, Ennaifer witnessed France's political unrest in May 1986, in which students and workers' protests against the government turned violent, leading to the arrest of hundreds of people. These events reaffirmed Ennaifer's and others' convictions that Bourquiba's westernised reforms were not going in the right direction and may not be the solution to Tunisia's problems.[9]

Ennaifer continued to believe in the Pan-Arab movement, unlike Ghannouchi, who became more religiously active after meeting an offshoot of the Pakistani Jamaat Tabligh we Al Da'wa in Paris. Ghannouchi's activism was demonstrated in the Da'wah, an essential activity the group relied on, and he soon became an Imam in one of its rural mosques in Paris. However, Ghannouchi did not know that the same group had become active in Tunisia.

Besides Ghannouchi and Ennaifer, there were influences from Abdulfattah Mourou (the third founder), a Sadiki College graduate studying for a higher degree in law at the University in Tunis.[10] Despite coming from the Sufi order, Mourou found that Sufism did not guide the everyday life of Muslims in the modern age. Therefore his encounter with the Tabligh group attracted him to the da'wa activity providing him with some social activity he thought Muslims should adopt.[11]

After being summoned to return to Tunisia by his family, Ghannouchi continued his Da'wa activities in Tunisia, where he met with Mourou in a mosque. Ghannouchi's acquaintance with Mourou gave him hope that the revival of Islam could succeed. However, Ennaifer, who was still in

[9] Anne Wolf interview with Hamida Ennaifer, Bardo, July 2013.

[10] Wolf, Anne; "Political Islam in Tunisia: *The History of Ennahda*"; Oxford University Press 2017; p.34.

[11] Anne Wolf interview with Abdelfattah Mourou, Tunis, July 2013.

Paris, informed them of a change of heart regarding Pan-Arabism and a complete shift to Islam. At this stage, the three founded the first cell, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya.[12]

The three founders quickly enlarged the movement's base, recruiting new members following Tabligh's method. They spread their Da'wa targeting cafes, public gatherings, street markets, and shops. The mosque of Sidi Youssef in the souk (market) became their first secret meeting place.[13] Most members of the J.I. who were interested in Tunisia's current realities distanced themselves from Tabligh's focus on individual piety to focus more on social activism.[14]

Aside from the methods of the Tabligh in Da'wa, the JI embraced the elaborate recruitment structure of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to boost its membership.[15] Members were divided into formal and informal families. Activists from the formal family would educate members of the informal family. After being vetted for morally correctness, members would join the formal family to learn about the organisation's existence and endeavours.[16]

The JI relied on different funds sources; members would pay membership fees (students would pay $0.50, and adults $2.50). Additionally, it will collect donations, and it soon became self-sufficient. While all this was going underground, members of al-Jama'a used their capacities in legal channels to spread their cause to larger audiences. For example, Abdulfattah Mourou, a leading figure in the Association for Safeguard the Qur'an (ASQ), used its platform to travel from one city to another to recruit and collect funds.

Bourquiba, was still occupied with his fight against the far left, a political fight that extended even to the campus of universities. The al-Jama'a gained prominence and popularity within a brief period and even extended to the campus. The Bourquiba regime deliberately ignored its growth, believing it could help it diminish the far-left base. This strategy was evident in campuses where the JI base proliferated. Students from the

[12] Tamimi, Op. Cit. pp. 28–30.

[13] Wolf, Anne, Op. Cit. p. 36.

[14] Jourchi, Slaheddine; "les independants et la societe civile doivent peser de tout leur poids," Leaders, September 2011.

[15] Wolf, Anne; Op. Cit.

[16] Ibid., p. 37.

rural areas in Tunisia, often hailing from a conservative and religious background, were unable to adapt to the western, secular lifestyle of Tunis. The made some of the students to find relevance and comradeship with the JI group on campus, leading them to join their lines. While the far-left atheism and opposition provoked the regime's dissent, it also triggered the JI action rallying students on campus to protest against the far-left bloc. The rally led to violent clashes between the groups and unveiled the first crack within the JI lines. While JI activists organised the rally, in response to the rising violence, the JI the students' wing issued a statement condemning the use of violence and signed by the students of the *Mouvement Tendance Islamique* (MTI) otherwise referred to as the Islamic Tendency Movement.'[17] The students chose the name to stress their calling for religious-based social and political action to counter secularisation rather than only focusing on personal piety and Da'wa as what JI was doing at the time.[18]

Movement Tendance Islamique/ Islamic Tendency Movement

The name was soon adopted by the JI in their congress in July 1979 in Manouba, west of Tunis. It marked a new era and strategy of the group in which they stressed their willingness to take socio-economic and political positions and started to work towards a more structured organisation. This decision resulted from the MTI's response to the continuous split among student and senior members on whether to shift to an embedded Islam in socio-economic and political life or focus on Da'wa and individual piety. Also, during the same conference, the group discussed their relationship with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood; another cause of conflict in MTI. Hamida Ennaifer, a strong advocate of progressive Islam and an opponent of the Muslim Brotherhood, considered the Brotherhood a dogmatic model of Islam unsuitable for Tunisia's social and political culture. Although he and many others in the MTI were initially inspired by the Brotherhood, after watching their 50 years of failed struggle into achieving their goals, he distanced himself from them and advised against associating MTI with it. After failing to convince the

[17] Ibid., p. 43.

[18] Ibid.

majority of MTI of his theory, Ennaifer and 20 members split from the MTI, causing the first rift in the group since its establishment. It was also at the same conference that the group established the General Congress, which exists as the supreme authority of the group and meets every three years. The conference elected nine members of the Shura Council and Rachid Ghannouchi as President of the Executive Office. The office is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Shura Council decisions.[19]

Bourquiba did not realise the extent of the MTI establishment until 1980 when two executive bureau members, Salah Karker and Hassan Demni, were arrested by chance in police patrol and found in possession of the organisation chart of MTI. At that time, Salah Karker was serving as the deputy to Ghannouchi and a severe believer in the dogmatic Islam fracture of the MTI. The two revealed under torture the structure and names of MTI members, causing Bourquiba a shock by how well-established the Islamists were. The regime initiated a complete crackdown on the group, during which Ghannouchi was also arrested.

The Use of Violence: The Security Group

The notion of violent jihad was not a foreign ideology to the MTI. The fact that MTI was inspired mainly by the Brotherhood's teachings of Qutb, one of the founders of the ideology of violent jihad in the Islamic movements worldwide, shows that the ideology was embedded early on. It is also known that Hassan Karker, the deputy of Ghannouchi, was a fierce advocate for the Brotherhood and associated MTI with its international apparatus. Also, Al-Ghannouchi, in his publication titled: "Islam and Violence", stated, "…if a tyrannical force is using dictatorship to obstruct its people from practice of its freedoms, including the freedom of belief, the state of Islam should eliminate these tyrannical institutions even with the use of force…".[20]

Following the crackdown on the group, most senior members were arrested and given death or life sentence. In his book "Years of Hell", Al-Munsif Bin Salem, a senior member of MTI, claimed that after learning of

[19] Ibid.

[20] Al Ghannouchi, "From the Experience of the Islamic Movement in Tunisia," p. 340.

the day of execution on 30 December 1987, the group decided to overthrow the regime to save their brothers and free Tunisia of the tyrannical government of Bourquiba.[21] He noted that the idea of using violence was growing over time among different groups, especially the students, due to the crackdown, the economic failure and political chaos in the country.[22] Some senior leaders in the group formed a secret military wing unknown to the rest of the MTI. Members were chosen carefully and under strict conditions, mainly members of the security sector who sympathised with MTI and their cause. The group chose 7 November 1987 to execute the coup. Despite the well-structured and organised plan, the lack of members who are senior decision makers in the security sector and enjoy the experience of active battle engagement made the plan vulnerable.[23]

On 5 November 1987, one of the activists involved in the coup revealed the plan to his uncle. The uncle, an official in the Ministry of Interior, reported it to the Minister at the time, Zein Abdin Bin Ali. On 6 November 1987, Bin Ali called for a cabinet meeting and declared Bourquiba's abdication on the ground of his failing health condition. He assumed power right before MTI could activate its plan.[24] The 1987 coup was not the only busy work of the security group, as was later revealed by his files. As the following lines will show, the security group continued to exist as a parallel shadow structure to the public Da'wa and administrative one, calling on it in times of emergency and conflict against the regime.[25] One of its most notorious attacks was the events of "Bab Souika," which will be described below.[26]

[21] Al-Munsif Bin Salem, "Years of Hell."

[22] Bin Salem, Al Munsif, "Years of Hell."

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] "After three decades….Fiery testimony Uncovers the Involvement of Ennahda in Terrorism," Al Arabiya News, 23 March 2021; After 3 Decades…Fiery Testimony Uncovers the Involvement of Ennahda in Terrorism.

[26] Trabulsi, Hoda, "Bab Souika Operation of 1991 Renews the Accusations of Terrorism against Ennahda in Tunisia," Independent Arabia, 25 March 2021; https://www.independentarabia.com/node/205651/تونس-في-الإرهاب-اتهامات-تجدد-1991-عام-سويقة-باب-عملية-تقارير/سياسة[27]

Ennahda and Bin Ali

With Bin Ali in power, MTI, later changing its name to Ennahda (Renaissance), did not enjoy a better relationship with the governing regime than with Bourquiba's. As Minister of Interior, Bin Ali did not advocate for using violence against the Islamists. Rather, he commenced his reign with statements supporting collectivity, inclusiveness, freedom of speech, democracy, and women's rights. However, his actions contradicted his statements. In the first year of Bin Ali's administration, several activists reported the banning of publications, and persecution against the press, the media, and Islamists stopped. Additionally, Ennahda members who were known to be involved in the coup were neither arrested nor investigated.

The change in Bin Ali's tone towards Ennahda started when he felt their collective power in the early parliamentary elections of 1989. While existing as an unlicensed political party, Ennahda decided to participate in the elections by putting as many group members on individual lists as possible to gain the majority. A plan secured 14% of the national vote and 30% in some localities. However, Bin Ali was still not willing to include Islamists in power. The RCD party was declared victorious in all constituencies.[27] Additionally, Bin Ali won election with 99.27% of the vote, evoking an outcry among the opposition.[28] In the same year, Ennahda's application for party status was rejected because several senior members had criminal records and had been imprisoned for over three months. Another blow to the Islamists was the arrest of the editor-in-chief of their publication Al-Fajr after allowing it to operate for a few months and accusing it of publishing defamatory articles. The publications were banned in 1991. As it turned out, this was also a trap for Ennahda to uncover their ideologies, narratives and how they frame their ideas to the public.[29]

These events coincided with the rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique du Salut, FIS; al Jabha al-Islamiyya lil-Inqadh) in neighbouring Algeria. The FIS became the dominant party in the 1990 parliamentary elections. A victory that Ghannouchi capitalised on to incite

[27] Wolf, Anne; Op. Cit. p. 71.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Hamid, Shadi, "Temptations of Power: Islamists and Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East," Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

opposition against the regime and replicate 'the splendid Algerian intifada of 1988.'[30] Bin Ali saw these events, among many others, as a threat to his rule, causing him to tighten his measures on Islamists and restrain their freedoms. Ennahda members suffered disruptions in their daily activities, including job discrimination, passport seizure, ban of their gathering, and arrests of protesters on campuses.

The conflict between Bin Ali and Ennahda came to its head in the early 1990s. A student was shot on campus during a demonstration, an event that provoked more protests followed by massive arbitrary arrests at the University. Bin Ali's increasingly repressive methods led to a more radicalised response from Ennahda which was evident in the "Bab Souika" events. In February 1991, activists with links to Ennahda burned down an office of the RCD party in Bab Souika in central Tunis at night. The fire resulted in killing the guards and wounding others. Although Ennahda denied its responsibility and association with the incident, Karim Abdulsalam, a former member of Ennahda and the mastermind of the attack, testified that Ennahda's leadership, including Ghannouchi, organised and executed it through its youths.[31] In response to Bab Souika's events, Bin Ali's regime activated a harsh crackdown on Ennahda members and their families.

Like what happened with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1960s, Ennahda was split into two categories. A group which included Al-Munsif Bin Salem, Ali Layraidah, and Hamad Jabali was imprisoned for up to 39 years during which they suffered torture and inhumane treatment. Their family members were reported to have also suffered harassment, and the threat of violence and some were coerced to divorce detained husbands while the children of detainees were denied equal education rights.[32] The other group managed to flee the country for Europe and lived in different European countries. Ghannouchi, stayed in the UK till the fall of Bin Ali in 2011.

[30] Murphy, Emma C., "Economic and Political Change in Tunisia: From Bourquiba to Bin Ali," London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999, p. 195.

[31] "After three decades….Fiery testimony Uncovers the Involvement of Ennahda in Terrorism," Al Arabiya News, 23 March 2021; After 3 Decades…Fiery Testimony Uncovers the Involvement of Ennahda in Terrorism.

[32] Wolf, Anne; "Political Islam in Tunisia: *the History of Ennahda*"; Oxford University Press 2017; p. 85.

Whether in prison or exile, Bin Ali's repression did not deter Ennahda from continuing its movement. It enhanced its resilience, giving it a reason and opportunities to reconsider its strategies. While Ghannouchi was in exile, he reshaped the organisational structure of the movement, establishing a new Executive Office and appointing a new Shura Council. Consequently, the movement had two parallel organisations, domestically and internationally. Realising his need for international support and sympathy to pursue his mission, Ghannouchi redefined his ideology, developing a distinctive narrative leaning towards accepting democracy and multi-party politics as long as it does not exclude religion. His turn in ideology was apparent in his publication of "al-Hurriyat al- 'Amma fi al-Dawla al Islamiyya" (Public Liberties in the Islamic state), issued in 1993.

Gannouchi's pragmatic stance did not only gain him the support of European countries but the support of his former enemies on the far left. After Bin Ali's crackdown on the Islamists, he moved towards neutralising the regime's secular-leaning opponents. The secular far left and the Islamists forged an alliance to fight his authoritarianism. The alliance was initiated by the far-left activist Moncef Al Marzouqui with the establishment of the Congress for Republic (CPR). Al Marzouqui invited activists from different ideologies, including Islamists, to remove their divisions and unite against Bin Ali. As a result of the CPR, the Call of Tunis Agreement was developed in June 2003 in France and signed by most activists in exile, including Ennahda and the secular far left. Although the agreement and the CPR called for very noble and unified objectives, the alliance failed eventually. As the presidential election of 2009 approached, different far-left party members of the CPR were looking to present their candidates in the elections, disagreeing on a unified candidate to run on behalf of the CPR. Additionally, Bin Ali, still not intending to share the power, started selecting members from the parties loyal to him to run in the elections. At this point, Ennahda, headed by Ghannouchi, realised the fight against Bin Ali was lost. As a result, the group shifted its focus towards reconciliation with the regime.

After all their efforts failed, Ennahda members in the late 2000s, together with political refugees, launched the Right-to-Return initiative. The initiative aimed to request reconciliation with Bin Ali and his administration to grant them the right to return to Tunisia, as many members had been disconnected from their families for over 25 years. Bin Ali accepted this initiative since it presented him an opportunity to appear as

a moderate and open leader to the international community. The administration however insisted that the initiative will be based on individual requests, meaning individuals would submit their requests to the Tunisian embassy in their host country, and each will be handled on a case-by-case basis. This approach was perceived as another cunning strategy from Bin Ali to create divisions among Ennahda's lines and weaken them abroad, which was successful. Ghannouchi therefore opposed the regime's offer as he could see how it would divide the group but several members started accusing him of being unreasonable towards his followers by not understanding their need to return home to see their families. Others even started returning without his consent. Consequently, Ennahda's membership base declined severely, and it became a phantom of itself.[33]

The weakening of Ennahda's structure gradually forced Ghannouchi to adopt a more conciliatory stance towards the regime, and he sent a letter requesting reconciliation. The call for reconciliation became public in Ennahda's congress in May 2007 and was declared in their statements.[34] Bin Ali saw great value in accepting reconciliation with Ennahda. Already in his mid-seventies, the leader was intent on preparing Tunisia for his successor. From Bin Ali's perspective, accepting reconciliation with Ennahda benefited him. During that time, Bin Ali was in his mid-seventies and preparing Tunisia for his successor. Candidates included his wife, Leila or his son-in-law. Believing that Ennahda is no longer a serious threat after succeeding in repressing them for almost 20 years, he considered reconciliation would culminate to a favourable political atmosphere for his successor. Additionally, he saw Ennahda as a lesser evil than the Salafis, who emerged during that time.

Ennahda's reconciliatory approach was only a façade for their actual motives. As soon as Hamad Jebali, former editor-in-chief of Al-Fajr and an interim president in the 80, was released in 2006, he started regrouping and restructuring the movement underground. Working in concert with Ali Laryadh, he called for former members to rejoin the group. However, Bin Ali created an atmosphere of fear that many released prisoners and

[33] Vincent Geisser and Eic Gobe, "Un si long regne … le regime de Ben Ali vingt ans apres," L'Annee du Maghreb, 2008, CNRS Editions, p. 356.

[34] Final Declaration of the Eight Congress of Ennahda.

returned exiled members did not want even to be seen associating with Ennahda or participating in politics overall.[35]

Additionally, an inquiry by Ennahda among its 350 members at the time showed that while the leadership was still fighting for political change, the file and work of the movement were more interested in economic and social change based on Islamic principles. It reflected the current hardship the public was going through due to the high unemployment rates, economic inflation and lack of development projects to support the marginalised. Ennahda started providing some financial aid to its members. However, the amount was insignificant and ineffective.

On the other hand, the leadership remained vigilant in enacting a political change. In 2005, senior Ennahda leaders returned to the campuses, targeting mainly the new generation of students whose parents were former Ennahda prisoners or in exile. A clear example was Oussama Bin Salem, Al Moncef Bin Salem's son and leader of the new student wing of Ennahda. His father was a former Ennahda member responsible for creating the security group in the late 1980s to overthrow Bourquiba.

It is noteworthy to understand Ennahda's popularity and relevance among students due to their families' grievances while growing up. During Bin Ali's crackdown on Ennahda in the 1990s, children of political prisoners were denied government education and benefits. With the advent of the internet shortly after, the young generation became intrigued to understand why they were being discriminated against by the regime, leading them to surf the internet and exposing them to some extremist content. This search led many to develop a sense of defiance in the most radical form.

The student movement grew fast and spread across campuses in Tunisia using the name 'Independent Students Movement (ISM).' The movement did not want to uncover its links to Ennahda to gain ground quickly and to avoid the regime's clampdown. Additionally, only the founding members, who used to meet with Jebali and Layradh, knew about its association with Ennahda. Further, to avoid triggering the regime's security sensors, activities included cultural gatherings, student outings, and discussed international political issues, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It avoided discussing any Islamist ideologies or showing any opposition to

[35] "Tunisian Islamists Concerned by Extremism, Seek USG Support," Confidential U.S. Department of State Cable, Wikileaks, 3 December 2007.

the regime's policies. However, most members did not until it uncovered itself after the 2010–2011 uprising.

Despite the rapid popularity of ISM among students in Tunisia, it still encountered challenges. Due to Bin Ali's repressive measures against political opponents, some were either intimidated or disengaged from political reality in Tunisia. On the other hand, few other students were seriously keen on diving deeper into their Arab-Islamic roots. Those were the most dangerous, as they constituted a very fertile ground for recruitment by Salafi groups, which they later joined. Therefore, they engaged with Ennahda for a short while, but the movement failed to provide them with a satisfactory ideological anchor to quench their thirst for knowledge.

Ennahda and the 2011 Revolution

After years of repression and corruption by Bin Ali's regime, a critical mass was reached on 17 December 2010 when Tarek al-Tayeb Mohammed Bouazizi, a street vendor from Sidi Bouzid, set himself on fire after municipal officials humiliated him. Bouazizi's plight inspired protests in Tunisia against unemployment, poverty, corruption, and social injustice. The protest turned into a national revolution resulting in the ousting of Bin Ali from power on 14 January 2011.

In the interim, Beji Caid Essebsi, foreign affairs minister under Bourguiba and parliamentary spokesman under Ben Ali, was appointed interim prime minister. He dissolved the infamous RCD and announced elections for a Constituent Assembly. Additionally, he freed all political prisoners, including inmates linked to Ennahda and other violent extremist groups like Abdullah Bin Hussein (aka Abu Iyadh) who later founded the Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia.

The Ennahda reaped maximum benefit from the Tunisa uprising despite that it had no role in triggering the revolution. Concerned not to stimulate the curiosity of the international community and its secular opponents of copying the Iranian Revolution, Ennahda members decided to keep a low profile during the uprising. Also, Ennahda senior leadership was exercising caution in case Bin Ali managed to control the situation and exercise his usual repression on protesters. Furthermore, some of Ennahda's junior members and students joined the demonstrations but avoided partisan slogans. They aligned their demands and calls with the mass public, focusing only on social justice and anti-corruption.

When Ennahda realised Bin Ali's loss, they convened a second meeting where they agreed senior members would participate in the demonstration to show solidarity with the public. After the fall of Bin Ali within two weeks, the secularists were taken off guard when they found Ghannouchi and other Ennahda members returning from over 20 years in exile to be welcomed by thousands of supporters in Tunisia.[36] As soon as the movement gained the licence for a political party in mid-March 2011, Abdelhamid Jlassi, who was responsible for reviving the movement secretly in the 2000s, was tasked with recreating a physical Ennahda presence on the ground. According to his interview with Anne Wolf, author of "History of Political Islam in Tunisia," the party established 2064 Ennahda offices, including 24 bureaus representing different governorates in less than six weeks.[37]

In addition to its well-established organisational structure and broad outreach, Ennahda capitalised on its message on matters that were crucial to the public during the time, like social injustice, economic issues, and the fight against government corruption. Using this cunning strategy, Ennahda could secure 37% of the 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly votes, coming as the leading party. Ennahda's success in presidential elections mirrored their success in the constituent assembly, leading them to establish a coalition government called 'Troika'.

Despite Ennahda's promising achievement in uniting the majority of the public and parties behind its lines, its trajectory as a governing party caused its downfall. The party's first tactical mistake was dominating power and fragmenting the secular parties in the coalition. Although this approach complies with the Islamist ideology of "Nasr we el tamkin"—victory and empowerment—the final stage of the Islamist political reform, it did not suit the national context of Tunisia. As Ahmed Nazif, a Tunisian researcher on Islamist movement and terrorist groups, explains: "Ennahda could not empower its party and members from Islamizing the Tunisian environment, as it failed in deeply infiltrating the solid institutions of the government, meaning the security, defence, and intelligence sector and

[36] "Tunisian Islamist leader Rachid Ghannouchi returns home," BBC, 30 January 2011; https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12318824

[37] Wolf, Anne; "Political Islam in Tunisia: *The History of Ennahda*"; Oxford University Press 2017; p. 132.

could not Islamize the ideological and cultural institutions, like the educational facilities either."[38] Additionally, their political domination triggered their opponents distrust and held them responsible for the transitional gaps that occurred at the time.

Another fatal mistake of Ennahda was giving the Salafi groups free reign to operate politically and otherwise. To contain their groups, Ghannouchi advocated for allowing them to join political life, authorising them to establish parties. However, political life is against Salafism's core beliefs, which rely solely on hard activism. As some groups, like Hizb al-Tahrir and others, could resonate with his perception, the active thirsty youth who could not be satisfied with Ennahda or others defected, forming their cells, which later constituted factions of Ansar al-Shari'a and other violent jihadist groups locally and abroad. A problem that Ghannouchi and Ennahda are being tried today in a case called 'the travelling case' will be explained in the coming lines.

Ennahda's strategy towards Salafism was not the only pitfall it encountered. As matters, AST groups escalated after they attacked the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia in 2012, followed by the two political assassinations of Chokri Belaid and Mohammed Brahmi in 2013. The public and secularist parties were not appeased by the Ennahda regime and staged mass protests calling for its resignation from power. Efforts to comply with the public were unsuccessful, despite the resignation of Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali, succeeded by Ali Laraydh, who took a firmer stance against AST and even designated them as a terrorist group.

However, what became the deal breaker between Ennahda, the public and even its followers is what Ghannouchi termed "Islamic Democracy". To conclude the issue of Tunisia's search for identity combining the secular and Islamist wings of the society, Ghannouchi called for the removal of shari'a as a constitutional reference in drafting the constitution. This move caused Ennahda followers and others to accuse it of betrayal as it removed one of the movement's core principles.

Rebranding Ennahda for Islamic Democracy was convenient for Ennahda, allowing it to stay in power and continue its popularity contest in Tunisia. Additionally, the term was framed right after the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood and the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt, which Ennahda was keen to exchange expertise with on a different

[38] Ahmed, Nazif, "Why the Islamic Empowerment Project failed?," Hakaekonline, 13 September 2021; Why did the Islamic Empowerment Project Failed/Article.

level. However, its fall caused Ghannouchi to distance Ennahda from it and deny any institutional ties with its international body. Also, after the persecution of the Turkish Islamist party by the public, Ennahda was concerned that the international community would confuse it with APK and its transgression.

The Rise of Salafism

The emergence of Salafism in Tunisia was and still is a matter of great debate among scholars. Contrary to what many Tunisian scholars and seculars believe, Salafism found its grassroots among Tunisian Islamists and was not simply imported by the Wahhabism movement from Saudi Arabia in the 1980s. Ennahda's two predecessors Jamaa Islamiya and MTI were both inspired by Salafism ideologies and could have been characterised as salafi movements. However, their intentional distancing from the conservative Salafis and ideological rebranding lead to categorising them as "moderate Islamists." A tactic aimed at gaining international support and sympathy to gain and remain in power. It is precisely this strategy that cost the movement losing many of its followers to the conservative *Salafi* groups during different intervals of time. It all started from the 1980s when Ennahda's predecessor, MTI, chose to participate in parliamentary elections and apply for the party status. It is in this context that Shaykh Lazreq, a former Arab nationalist turned Islamist, left the MTI. Lazreq teamed up with Habib Dhaoui, a preacher from Sfax, and Kilami Ouachachi, an army lieutenant, to create Islamic Jihad, which plotted attacks against the state and the tourist industry.[39] Although the three founders of the group were captured in 1986 and executed, the movement's grassroots continued their struggle against the state, attacking several government facilities.[40] In the wake of the attacks, two members were arrested and sentenced, but most of the group members remained at large.[41]

The "Tunisian Islamic Front" (TIF), another Salafi group founded by MTI defectors, emerged around the same time. They included

[39] Wolf, Anne; "Political Islam in Tunisia: *The History of Ennahda*"; Oxford University Press 2017; p. 122.

[40] "7Italians, 4 Britons Hurt in Tunisian Hotel Blasts," Associated Press, 3 August 1987.

[41] Ibid.

Mohammed Ali Harath, an activist from Sidi Bouzid (later founded the Islam Channel in exile in the UK). Mohammed Khouja, a nutrition scientist who would create the Salafi Reform Front Party after the 2010–2011 uprising, as well as Abdallah al-Haji and Mongi al-Hachmi.[42] The group was uncovered and members were imprisoned among many others during the 1990s clampdown.

The phenomena of students disappointed with MTI response to the security crack and in need to satisfy their spiritual knowledge to relate to their Arab-Islamic roots continued to rise. Also, during the 2000s international political events, like the Palestinian intifada, Afghanistan, and the Iraq war, reinforced their drive to use violence to defend their religious identity. Therefore, Tunisians who could not exercise jihad on Tunisian soil, travelled to join the lines of foreign terrorist fighters (Mujahideen) in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, and Iraq. It is in this context, that some Tunisian terrorists were able to engage with Al-Qaeda and its founding members like Abduallah Azam, Ayman Zawahiri, and Usama Bin Laden.

However, despite the harsh measures enacted by Bin Ali's government on Islamists, some were able to build their cells in Tunisia. A dominant example is Jund Assad ibn el Furat or what was later known as the Soliman Group. A group of five Tunisians and one Mauritanian, led by Lassad Sessi, a Tunisian and Bosnian war veteran. The group and its leader crossed the border from Algeria after receiving militant training from the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat, GSPC). Aiming to establish a nationwide jihadi movement to bring down Bin Ali's regime by force, it recruited more than forty young men from Sousse, Tunis and Sidi Bouzid.[43] However, the group was arrested between 2006 and 2007, before any of its plans could be executed. It is noteworthy that in the period of only six weeks the Soliman group expanded from only five activists to forty people at its height. "Clearly, this was accomplished with the assistance of a much broader network of sympathisers," commented one diplomat in a classified U.S. government cable.[44]

[42] Torelli, Merone, and Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization"; Middle East Policy, Vol. XIX, No. 4, 2012.

[43] Pargeter, Alison, "Radicalisation in Tunisia," in George Joffe, ed., Islamist Radicalisation in North Africa: Politics and Process, New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 71–94.

[44] "2006/2007 Terror Cell in Tunisia: What Happened and Why," Secret Cable from U.S. Embassy, Tunis, 24 January 2008, Wikileaks.

After the 2011 uprisings, most jihadists who were in prison or abroad received a general amnesty by the interim government. In 2012, the Troika government led by Ennahda legalised the newly established Salafi Jabhat al-Islah (Front of Reform) in an attempt to emphasise multi-party politics and include the Salafi movement in the public political life in Tunisia. The FoR was presided over by Mohamed Khouja, a former MTI and more pragmatic Salafi. Ennahda's strategy to legalise a dogmatic Salafi movement was seen as beneficial to its own political agenda; as it not only allows the government to monitor the activity of Salafism, but also appear as the "moderate Islamist" to the international community.[45] However, this tactic brought Tunisia and Ennahda, one of its worst nightmares. Unlike the old guard of the Salafi movement, young members were dissatisfied with the discourse of the leadership to join parliamentary politics, considering it against the core Salafi principles. This led the more dogmatic and younger activists of the movement to shift to a more radical and violent interpretation of Islam, forming one of Tunisia's most lethal terrorist groups.

Understanding Al-Qaeda-Affiliates in Tunisia

The history of terrorism in Tunisia was also characterised by the presence of Al-Qaeda Network in the country which had established local cells of the international terrorist network. Such cells of Al-Qaeda include the Tunisia Combatant Group and the *Ansar Al Sharia—Tunisia*. The evolution and activities of both groups are discussed below.

Tunisian Combatant Group

Al-Qaeda's presence in Tunisia started with the establishment of the Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG) in 2000. The TCG was established by Seifallah Ben Hussein (aka. Abu Iyad al Tunisi) and Tarek Maaroufi, listed as Tarek ben Habib ben al-Toumi al-Maaroufi, in coordination with Al-Qaeda.[46] Ben Hussein, the main head of the TCG, is known to have

[45] Torelli, Merone, and Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization"; Middle East Policy, Vol. XIX, No. 4, 2012.

[46] Tunisian Combatant Group, the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, United Nations Security Council; https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/tunisian-combatant-group; 7 April 2011.

fled Tunisia in the 1990s and settled in the UK He was mentored by Abu Qatada, a well-known al-Qaeda cleric.[47] In his pursuit of jihadi aspirations, Ben Hussein moved to Afghanistan under the Taliban to join the Al-Qaeda ranks, where he rose to emerge as one of Usama Bin Laden's most important lieutenants.[48] Ben Hussein reportedly directed two Tunisian suicide bombers to assassinate Ahmed Shah Massoud, a prominent Afghan commander on 9 September 2001 for his opposition to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Ben Hussein subsequently fled to Pakistan but was later arrested in Turkey and extradited to Tunisia from Turkey in 2003, where he was later imprisoned for terrorist activities.

It is unclear whether TCG was affiliated with Ennahda or its secret apparatus at any given point. However, several Guantanamo Joint Task Force reports indicated that Ben Hussein was in contact with some members of Ennahda during the inception of the TCG and when he also started his involvement with the Islamist movement.[49] On 7 April 2011, the U.N. Security Council classified the TCG as a terrorist group on the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions list.[50]

Ansar Al Shari'a—Tunisia

Following the uprising that resulted in the collapse of former President Ben Ali's regime in 2011, Ben Hussein was released from prison on a general amnesty along with many other Islamist political prisoners. In the same year, he founded the Ansar Al-Sharia-Tunisia (AST) which recruited a large group of the Tunisians sympathetic to extremist ideology, many of whom were imprisoned with him for terrorist activities.[51] There however exists indications that the nucleus of the AST predates the release of Ben

[47] Thomas Joscelyn; "Al Qaeda ally orchestrated assault on U.S. Embassy in Tunisia"; Long War Journal, 2 October 2012; https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/10/al_qaeda_ally_orches.php.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Guantanamo reports….

[50] Tunisian Combatant Group, the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, United Nations Security Council;https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/tunisian-combatant-group; 7 April 2011.

[51] Saifullah Bin Hassine, the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, United Nations Security Council; https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/seifallah-ben-omar-ben-mohamed-ben-hassine; 23 September 2014.

Hussein from prison. Aaron Y. Zelin affirms that after talking to some AST members in 2013, they confessed that the idea of AST started in 2006 when Ben Hussein and 20 other extremist inmates started planning and lobbying for it.[52] Ben Hussein and his group expected an amnesty and a release from prison after the release of Hamadi Jebali in an amnesty granted by Ben Ali as part of his efforts to control the Islamist opposition in Tunisia.[53] Jebali was a senior member of Ennahda and later Tunisia's prime minister (2011–2013).

Doctrine of the Ansar Al Shari'a—Tunisia

With respect to its doctrine, the AST considers itself part of the Salafi movement, and its leaders repeatedly declared allegiance to the Al-Qaeda global Jihadi movement. Like the parent body, the Al-Qaeda Network, its ideology sought to establish an Islamic state governed solely by Shari'a law. Considering the theological background of its founder Abu Iyad, AST followed the teachings of well-known Al-Qaeda clerics, including Abu Quttada al Falistini, Abu Muhammed al-Maqdassi, and Abu Basir Tartusi, Hani Sabahi, and Anwar al-Awlaki.[54]

It is noteworthy to observe that the AST has repeatedly rejected the principle of democracy and the involvement of al-Nahda in state politics to assume power. To AST, the principle of state is not accepted unless it is an Islamic state modelled after the state in the time of Prophet Mohammed and the early Islamic Caliphate. While rejecting the governing regime, AST praised the revolution and considered it an element that paved the way for the Salafi movement to come to the open. Although the AST incorporated the principle of jihad in its Da'wa, it did not declare violence against the state in its early stages.

After the attempted attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia by AST in 2012, Ben Hussein fled to Libya, where he remained the head of the AST while also running different training camps for AST fighters network

[52] Aaron Y. Zelin; "Tunisia: Uncovering Ansar al-Sharia," the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 23 October 2013, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tunisia-uncovering-ansar-al-sharia.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Fabio Merone, "Salafism in Tunisia: An interview with a Member of Ansar Al-Sharia," Jadaliyya, 11 April 2013; https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28428/Salafism-in-Tunisia-An-Interview-with-a-Member-of-Ansar-al-Sharia

across the region.[55] In 2013, the AST was declared by the government of Tunisia responsible for assassinating two Tunisian politicians, Chokri Belaid, in February 2013 and Mohamed Brahmi in July 2013.[56] After remaining in Libya for a few years, U.S. forces that Bin Hussein was killed in an airstrike by its on Libya targeting Mokhtar Belmokhtar in 2015.[57] However, despite the announcement of Bin Hussein's death by U.S. forces in 2015, AQIM announced his death in 2020. The assassinations provoked public rage in Tunisia, putting pressure on the government to demonstrate accountability and form a firm response to AST. Consequently, the Government of Tunisia designated AST as a terrorist group highlighting its clear relation with Al-Qaeda, especially the AQIM in 2013. The death of Bin Hussein coincided with the emergence of ISIS and its polarisation of many AST fighters and other Tunisian jihadists. The AST presence gradually diminished as some of its members joined the ranks of the larger AQIM and others ISIS. It is unclear at the moment if there is any reminiscence of AST in or outside Tunisia.

Organisational Structure and Strategy of Ansar Al Shari'a—Tunisia

The organisational structure and strategy of the AST feed each other. Regarding the hierarchy, the organisation was described as "a non-hierarchical, lightweight, and decentralized movement, with an extended autonomy for the local groups, which are the real core of the movement."[58] However, this should not be confused with the group's senior

[55] Carlotta Gall and Eric Schmitt, "Jihadist From Tunisia Died in Strike in Libya, U.S. Official Says," *New York Times*, 2 July 2015; https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/world/africa/jihadist-from-tunisia-died-in-strike-in-libya-us-official-says.html?_r=0.

[56] "Seifallah Ben Omar Ben Mohamed Ben Hassine," United Nations Security Council, 23 September2014; https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/seifallah-ben-omar-ben-mohamed-ben-hassine.

[57] Patom, Callum, "Seifallah Ben Hassine: Tunisia's most wanted terrorist announced dead by U.S. forces"; International Business Times; 7 March 2015; https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/seifallah-ben-hassine-tunisias-most-wanted-terrorist-announced-dead-by-us-forces-1509205.

[58] Fabio Merone, "Salafism in Tunisia: An interview with a Member of Ansar Al-Sharia," Jadaliyya, 11 April 2013 https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28428/Salafism-in-Tunisia-An-Interview-with-a-Member-of-Ansar-al-Sharia.

leadership being irrelevant or lacking control over the local branches.[59] Nevertheless, it is however unclear to the extent to which local leaders had a free hand in managing the operations of their cells or to what level they complied with senior leadership's orders.[60] The advantage of its decentralised leadership structure is that the group can engage in violence without triggering a devastating crackdown from the state.[61] Additionally, considering its founder's ideological background, which Al-Qaeda directly developed, it is assumed that he would build a similar structure, where he would provide strategic guidance and policy from headquarters but would not coordinate the daily operations of the local cells.[62]

In terms of its horizontal structure, it was proven that AST has at least four central departments structured and coordinated as follows:

- Bin Hussein led the AST with the Shura Council.
- The Da'wa office was headed by Hisham al Saadi.[63]
- AST's humanitarian activities, including its medical convoys led by Ahmed Alakremi[64];
- Media wing, including the Al-Bayariq Media Production Foundation, AST's website and other online outlets for its propaganda headed by Afif Alamouri[65]; and
- A division that coordinates with local AST groups, where its activities were distributed geographically, into northern, central, and southern regions.[66]

[59] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Ansar Al-Sharia Long Game: Dawa, Hisba and Jihad," ICCT, May 2013.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Fabio Merone, "Salafism in Tunisia: An interview with a Member of Ansar Al-Sharia," Jadaliyya, 11 April 2013; https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28428/Salafism-in-Tunisia-An-Interview-with-a-Member-of-Ansar-al-Sharia.

[63] "Terrorism in Tunisia from the Judicial Files," Tunisian Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism, National Committee for Counterterrorism, Tunisia; http://www.cnlct.tn/?p=2599.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid and Fabio Merone, "Salafism in Tunisia: An interview with a Member of Ansar Al-Sharia," Jadaliyya, 11 April 2013 https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28428/Salafism-in-Tunisia-An-Interview-with-a-Member-of-Ansar-al-Sharia.

- A secret military wing (aka as Uqba Bin Nafe' Brigade or Katibet Uqba Ibn Nafe') led by Ahmed Alawadi (aka Altawil)[67]
- A secret security wing headed by Mohamed Alakari[68]
- The interception and false propaganda wing were still in progress in 2013 when authorities arrested several leadership figures.[69]

The recruitment success of the AST is typically ascribed to a combination of factors. The AST relied in its beginnings on the Da'wa (the Arabic word for preaching) to spread its ideology. While rejecting the Ennahda for embracing democracy, the group benefitted from the civil liberties it offered to conduct Da'wa in Tunisia actively. Statements from several AST members noted that the group would engage with youths in coffee shops, mosques, and public spaces to preach about Salafism and its doctrine.[70] Additionally, AST held an annual public meeting that thousands of individuals attended in Kairouan in May 2012.

Complementing its Da'wa efforts, the group filled a tremendous gap in the government's social services via humanitarian work, such as distributing food, clothing, and basic supplies, as well as sponsorship to convoys providing medical care and medicine.[71] These efforts concentrated on areas of Tunisia that were typically neglected or impoverished thereby enabling the AST to quickly gain ground among poor, uneducated, unemployed youth in Tunisia.[72] The AST social activities were always accompanied by the distribution of literature designed to propagate its ideology.[73]

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Ansar Al-Sharia Long Game: Dawa, Hisba and Jihad," ICCT, May 2013; also see: Christing Petre, Tunisian Salafism: "Tunisian Salafism: the Rise and Fall of Ansar Al-Sharia," Fride, issue no. 208, October 2015. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194178/PB209_Tunisian_Salafism.pdf.

[71] Gartenstein-Ross, Moreng & Soucy, "Raising the Stakes: Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia's Shift to Jihad," ICCT, February 2014.

[72] Christing Petre, Tunisian Salafism: "Tunisian Salafism: the Rise and Fall of Ansar Al-Sharia," Fride, issue no. 208, October 2015. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194178/PB209_Tunisian_Salafism.pdf.

[73] Gartenstein-Ross, Moreng & Soucy, "Raising the Stakes: Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia's Shift to Jihad," ICCT, February 2014.

Furthermore, the AST increased its impact and visibility through its adept use of social media, where it would post about its latest venture periodically. Gartenstein-Ross, an Associate Fellow at the ICCT, The Hague and subject matter expert on violent non-state actors and terrorism, observes that the social media worked as a force multiplier, highlighting the group's rapid pace of humanitarian efforts and appealing to more sympathisers and recruits.[74]

Shifting to Violence

Although the AST included the principle of violent jihad in its teachings, it adopted a very cunning and gradual approach to shifting to violent activities. While spreading the Da'wa, the group created a shadowy militia wing that mainly undertook military training in Jebel el Chammbi (a remote area on the border with Algeria). While Abu Iyadh and others preached in Tunisia, they encouraged followers to go overseas, especially to join the fight in Syria against Bashar al-Assad's regime.[75]

Another side of the AST violence manifested in the *Hisba*. The *Hisba* is the Arabic word for enforcing Shari'a through the use of moral police who would deter the public from committing religious wrongdoings and order good deeds using any means possible including violence. *Hisba* violence included targeting women, prostitution, freedom of speech, media practitioners, journalists, and anyone who did not embrace the same Salafi ideology. However, the action of *Hisba* violence was largely masked by the clandestine structure of AST.[76] Attacks were mainly in local areas and were made individually without drawing attention to any specific pattern or structure. Additionally, perpetrators were individuals who generally belonged to the Salafi wing but were not necessarily affiliated with the AST. In other instances, incidents involved AST members though actions were not necessarily directed by AST leadership.

Subsequently, the AST turned to clear and organised terrorist action attacking the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and an American school adjacent to

[74] Ibid.

[75] Christing Petre, Tunisian Salafism: "Tunisian Salafism: the Rise and Fall of Ansar Al-Sharia," Fride, issue no. 208, October 2015. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194178/PB209_Tunisian_Salafism.pdf.

[76] Gartenstein-Ross, Moreng & Soucy, "Raising the Stakes: Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia's Shift to Jihad," ICCT, February 2014.

it on 14 September 2012. During this attack, the militia wing of AST came to light under the name of Uqbah Ibn Nafi' Brigade (aka. Katibet Uqbah Bin Nafi'), whose activities became a manifestation of the clear and highest level of violent jihad.

Katibet Uqbah Bin Nafi'

The word *"Katibet"* in Arabic means a battalion. According to military terms, a battalion consists of several groups of men; each company would usually comprise 15 men. In Arabic, the company is referred to as "*Serrya*" and served as the basic unit of an organisation like Katibat Uqbah Ibn Nafi (KUIN).[77] Official sources in Tunisian notes that the KUIN comprises at least two *serryas*. It was unclear the exact number of individuals in each *serrya*, but a modest estimate suggests that each *serrya* consists of about 30 persons each bringing the total number of KUIN members to about 60 to 80 fighters at least.[78] Since the *serrya* operate largely in the Algeria-Tunisia border areas, it is speculated that the KUIN included members from both countries which facilitates their operations in both countries and gain the logistical and operational support of the well-established AQIM.[79]

Affiliation with Al-Qaeda Network

Evidence from judicial files on terrorism investigations indicates that the AST is a direct affiliate of the Al-Qaeda Network (AQN) as its Emir, Abu Iyadh pledged allegiance (bay'a) to the Emir of AQN's regional branch known as the Al-Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This is further corroborated by findings obtained from the interrogations of Mohamed Al Awadi, head of AST's military wing who testified that the inception of AST occurred after Bin Hussein disagreed with Al Idrissi

[77] Col. Mohamed Kasdallah, "Terrorists in Tunisia Adopt 'Asymmetric' Warfare Tactics," *Al-Monitor* (11 November 2013).

[78] "Tunisie: deux militaires tués dans une explosion au Jebel Chaambi", *Jeune Afrique* (6 June 2013); "Des groupes liés à Al-Qaida recherchés en Tunisie," *Le Monde* (7 May 2013).

[79] "Tunisia Hunts al-Qaeda-Linked Militants Near Algeria," *Reuters* (7 May 2013), http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/07/us-tunisia-qaeda-idUSBRE9460E920130507.

about organising the Salafi movement in an established structure which Al Idrissi was against. Subsequently, Bin Hussein called for a rally inviting the Salafi youths where he suggested the name of the organisation to be Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia. This change was to avoid using the name 'Al-Qaeda in Tunisia' in order to prevent any negative consequences associated with the name of Al-Qaeda.[80]

However, AST's links to the AQN are based on several layers other than its bayah. The first layer is its leadership long standing relations with the AQN. As earlier mentioned, Bin Hussein and other AST members, like Tarek Maaroufi, Sami Bin Khamis Essid, and Mehdi Kammoun, were part of Al Qaedas European network during the early 2000s. Additionally, Bin Hussein allegedly worked directly with Osama Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri in the Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, where he formed the Jalabad Group volunteering to defend Bin Laden and the embattled AQN fighters at Tora Bora.[81]

The ideological tie is the second apparent link of AST to the AQN and its affiliates. Bin Hussein was mentored by Abu Qatada al Filistni, the AQN religious cleric based in the UK, sometimes called, Bin Laden's ambassador in Europe. Furthermore, members and recruits were often radicalised during AST rallies using theological material of renowned AQN religious clerics, like Anwar Al-Awlaki, Hani al-Sebai, Abou Mohamed Al-Maqdisi, and Abu Qatada.[82] This explains the strategy AST used to recruit and polarise new members with its strategy of jihad which was in compliance with AQN's directions and goals.

In the wake of the U.S. Embassy attack and the two political assassinations of 2012, the Tunisian government established financial ties between the AST and its mother organisations, the AQN and AQIM. The ties were confirmed by David Cohen, then U.S. Undersecretary of Treasury in charge of Terrorism Financing and Financial Intelligence, when he noted that the AQIM has provided funding for other terrorist groups

[80] "Terrorism in Tunisia from the Judicial Files," Tunisian Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism, National Committee for Counterterrorism, Tunisia, date…. http://www.cnlct.tn/?p=2599.

[81] "Ansar Al-Sharia Profile," Counter Extremism Project.

[82] Fabio Merone, "Salafism in Tunisia: An interview with a Member of Ansar Al-Sharia," Jadaliyya, 11 April 2013 https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/28428/Salafism-in-Tunisia-An-Interview-with-a-Member-of-Ansar-al-Sharia.

including Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia.[83] The AST affiliations were however not limited to the AQN and AQIM. They also extended to the Ansar al-Sharia Libya due to its need for its logistical support and location to train jihadists away from surveillance of the Government of Tunisia. The close links between the AST and the AQN also existed prior to the terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy in 2012 and even afterwards. From 2011 onwards, Libya was highlighted as the number one area for training camps for Tunisian jihadists who were prepared to become foreign terrorist fighters in conflict zones like Syria or homegrown terrorists in Tunisia.[84] In the post-attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, senior AST leaders such as Bin Hussein sought shelter in Libya among the ASL, where he continued to manage training camps for Tunisian jihadists on Libyan soil, taking advantage of the country's political turmoil and security absence.

Support for the Islamic State in Tunisia

The AST expressed support for the Islamic State (IS) through social media posts and official communications. For instance, on 9 April 2013, AST posted a photo of IS militants on its website with a banner that read: "O lions of god in all the earth Call out Allah Akbar, for victory and conquest is ours. Rejoice, for the glorious caliphate is near. Our [sharia] will reign over every corner [or inch of land]."[85] In May 2013, now-deceased AST deputy leader, Kamel Zarrouk stated: "I would like to declare loud and clear that the al-Nusra Front, Ansar al-Sharia, al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and the mujahideen in Somalia, Mali, and Algeria, we all stand united against our enemies."[86] However, when al-Qaeda formally severed ties with ISIS in February 2014, AST

[83] "Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen before the Center for a New American Security on 'Confronting New Threats in Terrorist Financing'," U.S. Department of the Treasury, 4 March 2014, http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2308.aspx.

[84] Terrorism in Tunisia from the Judicial Files Tunisian Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism, National Committee for Counterterrorism, Tunisia, date…. http://www.cnlct.tn/?p=2599.

[85] Thomas Joscelyn, "Social Media Jihad: Cheerleading Al Qaeda's New 'Islamic State," Long War Journal, 9 April 2013, http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/04/social_media_jihad_cheerleadin.php.

[86] Mischa Benoit-Lavelle, "Tunisia Considers Crackdown on Radical Preachers," Al-Monitor, 10 May 2013,

members were already divided in their support for the two groups.[87] Throughout 2014, many AST leaders, including its spokesman Seifeddine Rais, pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.[88]

After evading government capture in Tunis, the Magharebia media reported that Zarrouk who is known in his [Tunisian] neighbourhood as someone who encouraged young people to go for jihad in Syria, reportedly travelled to Syria to fight alongside IS. This is because he considered it to be the springboard for establishing an Islamic state from the Gulf to the ocean."[89] Contrarily, AST leader Seifallah Bin Hussein discouraged Tunisians from migrating to "active jihad fronts" abroad, lamenting that the wars in Syria and Mali had "emptied Tunisia of its young."[90]

After the Tunisian government designated AST as a terrorist organisation on 27 August 2013, many AST members travelled to Syria to fight alongside ISIS. In February 2014, it was estimated that more than 5,000 Tunisians had travelled to Syria to fight against the Government of Bashar al-Assad. Back in Tunis, the Tunisian Interior Minister Lofti Ben Jeddou confirmed the same month that Tunisian security forces had prevented 8,000 Tunisians from travelling to Syria to fight. Tunisians have further featured heavily in ISIS propaganda, and ISIS has regularly eulogised Tunisian fighters and suicide bombers.

http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/contents/articles/opinion/2013/05/tunisia-terrorist-crackdown.html.

[87] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Bridget Moreng, "Tunisian Jihadism after the Sousse Massacre," Combatting Terrorism Center Sentinel 8, no. 10 (2015): 15, https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2015/10/CTCSentinel-Vol8Iss1036.pdf.

[88] Abdallah Suleiman Ali, "Global Jihadists Recognise Islamic State," Al-Monitor, 3 July 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/07/syria-iraq-isisislamic-caliphate-global-recognition.html#; Jemal Arfaoui, "Tunisia: Ansar Al-Sharia Spokesman Backs Isis," AllAfrica, 14 May 2013, http://allafrica.com/stories/201407090299.html.

[89] Haim Malka and Margo Balboni, "Getting There: Journeys to Foreign Battle Zones," Center for Strategic & International Studies, June 2016, http://foreignfighters.csis.org/tunisia/getting-there.html; Bill Roggio, "Ansar Al-Sharia Tunisia Deputy Leader Reportedly in Syria," Long War Journal, 27 February 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/02/ansar_al_sharia_tuni_7.php.

[90] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Ansar Al-Sharia Tunisia's Long Game: Dawa, Hisba, and Jihad," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague, May 2013, http://www.icct.nl/download/file/Gartenstein-Ross-Ansar-al-Sharia-Tunisia%27s-Long-Game-May-2013.pdf; Bill Roggio, "Ansar Al Sharia Tunisia Deputy Leader Reportedly in Syria," Long War Journal, 27 February 2014, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/02/ansar_al_sharia_tuni_.

Tunisia and Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The phenomenon of Tunisians becoming Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and joining jihad overseas is not a new one. Prior to the revolution of 2011, the number of Tunisian fighters crossing the border and joining militia groups in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechneya, Iraq, and Algeria was the smallest compared to fighters from Saudi, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria.[91] In 2016, the Tunisian Center for Terrorism Studies estimated that the number of Tunisian fighters joining terrorist organisations abroad after 2011 increased by 50%.[92] The first batch of Tunisians joining the militia groups was a group of youth from Benkerdan joining the lines of the Al-Farouq Brigade affiliated to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in Syria in early 2012.[93]

The increase in the Tunisian foreign terrorist fighters after 2011 is attributed to several local, regional and international factors, but the main one is what Ahmed Nazif, a Tunisian national with expertise in political Islam called "the empty the scene" strategy. This strategy was the creation of a governing regime, which was Ennahada at the time. Between 2011 and 2012, the governing regime allowed AST and other Salafi jihadi groups to openly recruit and call for violent jihad facilitating their travel to conflict zones, mainly Syria, as it contributed to the famous fight against the Assad regime.[94] Several public statements were made by senior Ennahada members (who also were government officials) encouraging and praising jihadists who joined the militia ranks in Syria. Hammadi al Jebaili, Tunisia's Prime Minister and Secretary General of Ennahada, declared that; "This is not new, the Tunisian youth turned everywhere to fight, like in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia."[95]

Another incident mentioned by Mr Mohamed Al Souessi that Al-Ghannouchi himself endorsed the travel of Tunisian foreign fighters to

[91] Ahmed Nazif, "Ten Hours shook Tunisia, the U.S. Embassy Attack and its aftermath."

[92] "Terrorism in Tunisia from Judicial Files," Tunisian Center for Research and Studies on Terrorism, October 2016.

[93] Ahmed Nazif, "Ten Hours shook Tunisia, the U.S. Embassy Attack and its aftermath."

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ahmed Nazif, "Ten Hours shook Tunisia, the U.S. Embassy Attack and its aftermath."

Syria, where he stated to Al Souessi's and another family seeking his help to return their youth home saying: "For your son to die in Syria, is better than dying here. He will be a martyr and intercede for you on the last day. Fighting Bashar Al Assad is better than staying here."[96] These two remarks and many others prove that the increase in Tunisian foreign terrorist fighters was an endorsed strategy by the government that began in 2011.

Going back to the "Empty the Scene" strategy, the AST's attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia in 2012 caused AST (and the jihadi Salafi want) to be perceived as a liability by Ennahda, costing them local popularity and international allies at the very least. Considering the original ideological ties and the wide popularity AST gained among the public, Ennahda did not want to engage in open confrontation with AST. Therefore, it capitalised on its strategy of using the existing division among the AST ranks, where Al Khatib Al Idrissi, AST's religious leader, disagreed with Bin Hussein's strategy of establishing an organisational structure for the Salafi movement and his call to jihad in Tunisia, mentioning publicly that Tunisia is a land of Da'wa and not jihad.[97] Al Idrissi insists that forming an organisational structure is against the Salafism doctrine which served as the principle Ennahda used to encourage him to call for jihad abroad in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

Additionally, Ennahda facilitated the travel of vast numbers of FTFs to conflict zones mainly through its secret security apparatus, which infiltrated all government security agencies heavily. In the "Secret Apparatus" case, documents found that Ennahda relied on Mustafa Khidr, the supervisor of the apparatus and a former security official for coordinating, facilitating and managing the travel of youth to join other jihadi organisations in the east where he had a vast network of contacts.[98] In addition, the documents uncovered Khidr's vast network among local security and border control agencies, giving him the opportunity to mobilise fighters across borders undetected.[99]

[96] Ahmed Nazif, "Ten Hours shook Tunisia, the U.S. Embassy Attack and its aftermath."

[97] Ibid.

[98] "The Black Room and Ennahda, Mostafa Khidr," Behind the Scenes, Alghad TV, 28 May 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhZtAhfSrrU

[99] Ibid.

Ennahda's plan to empty Tunisia from violent jihadists coincided with primary regional and international political goals to which this strategy was beneficial. Coincidentally, regional and international efforts were to continue the Arab Spring, toppling Al Assad's regime in Syria through turning Syria into a major war zone and capitalising the political and non-political opposition, including support from various jihadi groups. In an interview on the national Qatari television, Hamad's Bin Jassim Al Thani, Qatar Prime Minister, noted that the leaders of this strategy were Qatar, Saudi, and Turkey from the Arab and Islamic world as well as France and the United States from the west.[100]Al Thani emphasised, "we have full evidence of implementing this plan based on the coordination of Ankara and Washington and the distribution was done by the United States and Turkey and we and the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi. All are present in Syria militarily."[101] While Tunisia was not in the lead, Ennahda used the international need and political will for mobilising fighters to Syria to eliminate its own domestic threat and safeguard its position as the ruling regime in the country.

Conclusion

Tunisia's path of political Islam can be diagnosed as a long and challenging "search for identity." Beginning in the 1960s, Tunisians, including Islamists, struggled to define their identity and core ideology on which they could build a straightforward narrative and calling. Tunisians, in general, started their search for identity by calling for independence from their French occupiers and looking towards building a national Islamic identity. However, Bourquiba, educated and influenced by western ideas, rejected the Islamic element and insisted on instilling a Franco-Arab identity. Despite his progressive reforms, his methods of aggressive enforcement and persecution of Islamic values led to the flourishing of vehement opposition. Islamic extremists rejected Bourquiba's modernisation to preserve their identity, adopting a more conservative, even a radical, religious approach.

[100] Inverview with Sheikh Mohamed Bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani, Qatari Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Television, 26 October 2017.

[101] Ibid.

The Ennahda, predecessor of the JI and MTI was at inception inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood organisation in the 1960s and members remained keen on distinguishing themselves from peer movements in the region. However, such distinction came at a high price. The movement shifted away gradually from its fundamental principles, such as establishing an Islamic state based on Shari'a law. This pattern was evident on several occasions, starting in the 1960s when it dropped its advocacy for nationalism and Pan-Arabism due to transgressions of the Nasserite regime and later Ghadaffi in Libya. Similarly, in the 1990s, the movement aimed to beat Bin Ali in his own game by running for parliamentary elections. Also, in the 2011 revolution, Ennahda avoided appearing in the demonstrations not to imitate the Iranian Revolution (one of its inspirations in the 1970s). The final action was disassociating itself from the Egyptian Brotherhood after its fall in 2013 in Egypt and removing referencing the Shari'a in the constitution to appeal to the liberals and leftists to remain in power. This constant change of principles caused the movement to lose its credibility among followers, providing a spiritual and theological vacuum for more radical hardliners which the Salafists sought to fill.

The emergence and increase of violent extremist movements during the Ennahda years in the post-2011 government proved a striking experience for Tunisia. Unlike Bourquiba's and Bin Ali's approaches towards Islamists, which were characterised as suppressive, tyrannical and even discriminating, the Troika government was open and encouraged all Islamist movements, including Salafi jihadi ones, to join the political arena. However, the use of violence did not diminish and was even spread further beyond the borders of Tunisia. Therefore, one can only conclude that Ghannouchi's newly-invented term "Islamic Democracy" is nothing but an ear-pleaser to gain the sympathy and approval of the non-Islamic faction in Tunisia and the international community.

When following Ennahda's trajectory, one realises that the more conciliatory and pragmatic it became, the less appealing it became to its followers, especially the youths who are mainly drawn to it for its representation of fundamentalist Islamic ideas and the call for change through violent jihad. Ennahda and its predecessors came to a crossroads on several occasions, having to choose between preserving its fundamentalist Islamic principles or adopting a forward-leaning approach towards democracy. Every time, the movement would choose the latter, leaving a gap to implement the Islamic Shari'a, which does not recognise the main

principles of democracy, including the multi-party system in governance. To conclude, there is no such thing as "Islamic Democracy," as once the route of radical political Islam is open, there is no moderation.

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PART IV

Southern Africa

CHAPTER 19

Terrorism in Southern Africa: Portents and Manifestations

Anneli Botha

Introduction

According to membership of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the region consists of Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Since the DRC, Mozambique, and Tanzania will be discussed in separate chapters in this volume, the chapter on terrorism in Southern Africa will focus on remaining countries that were confronted with acts of terrorism.

Traditionally, despite examples of sporadic cases of domestic terrorism, Southern Africa is not placed in the same category of the threat and risk of "terrorism" as Eastern Africa (following instability in Somalia and the growing reach of al-Shabaab), Western Africa (with the growing influence

A. Botha (✉)
School of Government Studies, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
e-mail: anneliresearch1@gmail.com

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of Boko Haram), and Northern Africa (the original hotspot of violent extremism, especially since the 1980s).

Instead, according to SADC, the most prominent challenges the region is confronted with poverty and underdevelopment that directly challenge social and human development, as approximately half of the population lives below the international poverty line of USD 1 per day. Considered to be associated with poverty and leading to limited human development, unemployment (especially amongst the youth), and low industrial growth contribute to a cycle of high levels of migration of skilled labour out of the region. Additionally, high levels of disease, in particular HIV and AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis as well as natural disasters, such as recurrent droughts and floods as a result of climate change, reduce food security. The unfortunate consequence is social and civil conflict, again leading to limited human development.[1] Consequently, some countries in the region have to deal with refugees, illegal migrants, and internally displaced persons adding an additional strain on development. In addition to these challenges, the region is confronted by the eroding quality of democracy, bad governance, and rife corruption. Unequal access to natural resources and wealth further corrode social cohesion and a sense of collective identity, particularly national identity.

Similar to other studies conducted by the researcher identified several circumstances as fertile ground for extremist ideology: Firstly, poor governance, identified by the absent and/or negative relationship with the state, an inability to maintain territorial integrity over the entire country, inability to provide in the needs (for example, education, health care, security, basic services) and govern to the best interest of its citizens contribute to questions around the legitimacy of government. Secondly, poor socioeconomic circumstances, with reference to population growth and unemployment especially amongst the youth, further exacerbated by existing social divisions leading to further marginalisation on the basis of religion and ethnicity. Although not yet witnessed in South Africa, a growing concern is that it is not the lack of education, but rather a growing inability of government (civil service) and the private sector to absorb graduates will lead to civil unrest and political violence. Creating expectations by getting a better education and then followed

[1] Southern African Development Community. [Online] Available at: https://www.sadc.int/themes/social-human-development/ [Accessed 3 June 2020].

by an inability to secure a better future is expected to lead to frustration. Considering other circumstances in the country and fear that especially the economy will implode constantly adds to the growing fear that South Africa sits on a "powder keg" that can only lead to devastating consequences. Although this chapter will not focus on these underlying political, social and economic factors, but rather the growing manifestation and threat of violent extremism and terrorism, these underlying conditions will contribute to future instability.

Recognising the above challenges and the resources required to address these daily challenges, some governments and citizens alike have asked whether counterterrorism measures initiated over the last two decades, especially since the tragic events of 9/11, is really a top priority. Consequently, diverse exposure and experiences with the immediate and perceived threat of terrorism in the region contributed to countries taking different steps to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism. Similarly, due to the sporadic manifestation of acts and threats of terrorism, media attention as a driver of public interest varies considerably. As a result, the perception was created that many countries in the region adopt a reactive approach to the threat. Secondly, the threat of terrorism is often regarded as an agenda, imported and driven by external actors and not as a result of domestic challenges or frustrations. However, with the gradual spread of violent extremism from Eastern Africa and the DRC, the expansion of the Islamic State (IS), al-Qaeda and other domestic terror groups taking on a more transnational character that found a safe haven in Southern Africa, this threat can no longer be ignored. Instead, it requires individual countries to coordinate domestic efforts into a consolidated and dedicated regional strategy to counter and prevent radicalisation into violent extremism and terrorism.

Following the same framework as presented throughout this volume, this chapter will start by providing a background to terrorism in Southern Africa since independence and/or attaining democratic rule. The author recognises that although the pre-independence period is critical in explaining the climate leading up to more recent developments, the histories of each country will not be presented. Instead, where there is a direct correlation to the emergence of more recent ideologies, movements, and organisations, a reference will be made to perceptions of injustices and factors contributing to feelings of marginalisation. This chapter will rather refer to examples with a transnational character. Unfortunately, due to length limitations, purely domestic threats and cases with reference to

right-wing extremism in South Africa, the Black Mamba in Zambia or Swaziland's People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) and its youth wing Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO) that have been implicated in plots and attacks against government will not be presented.

Background to Terrorism in Southern Africa

The majority of countries in Southern Africa attained independence after periods of conflict with former governments. This psychological impact on whether individuals or groups that resorted to violence should be classified as "terrorists" (as part of the old argument that one person's "terrorist" is another person's "freedom fighter") had a lasting impact, even years after independence. The impact of this conundrum was first-hand witnessed when the government, in particular South Africa, was in the process of drafting the country's new legislation on terrorism. At the end, the country titled its legislation "The Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorist and Related Activities" (POCDATARA) after ten years of development. The evolutionary process of the South African anti-terrorism legislation has been marked by much controversy.[2]

Insufficient information on the magnitude of terrorism in Africa has led to a lack of understanding thereof and a lack of subsequent measures to address its manifestation. This is particularly evident in the covering and analysis of more recent events where historic and underlying reasons are being disregarded. A possible explanation for the lack of interest from the developed world might be that terrorism, as we know it today, developed from "domestic" terrorism, which was often regarded as internal and not relevant to an international audience.

The threat presented by violent Islamist extremism is regarded in a particular serious light especially due to its broad international and inter-connected reach and commitment to violence. Forming part of religious-motivated terrorism, religion in this case, Islam has been manipulated to become an ideology to justify the murder of others in the name of religion. This category includes both attacks directed at individuals representing another religion (for example Christians) and/or members of the same religion classified as the "other" for adhering to a different

[2] South African Government, "Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorist and Related Activities Act 33 of 2004" https://www.gov.za/documents/protection-constitutional-democracy-against-terrorist-and-related-acitivities-act.

interpretation of the same religious text. Manifestation of this form of violent extremism can take on a domestic and/or transnational character.

Countries in the region, however, also experienced other motivations leading to instability and acts of terrorism. For example, ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts for self-determination where the quest for territorial expansion in the name of self-determination carries with it the potential for conflict within and between states, creating a threat to national and regional stability. The Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) in Namibia and the Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC) in Angola serve as examples.

Although political motivated terrorism has a history in the region recognising that governments themselves through its security forces and elements overtly and/or covertly associated with the State (commonly referred to as "death squads") can make themselves guilty of severe forms of political violence intended to intimidate and terrorise citizens to prevent them from opposing the existing regime and using violence or the threat thereof to build a support base for the movement/organisation within immediate communities.[3] Considering the fine line between the degrees of political repression and its severest form namely "state terrorism" this chapter will not discuss this form of terrorism or its manifestation in the region.

History and Development of the Threat in Southern Africa

This section is in no way a complete account of the emergence of the threat of violent extremism and terrorism in the region. While many of these movements are dormant, the underlying factors that facilitate and escalate the resort to violent means as a result of perceptions of marginalisation and frustration, may still exist. As in many countries, these "fault lines" exist as a result of ethnic and/or religious diversity that contribute to a strengthening of ethnic and/or religious identity, subsequently often leading to a decreasing national identity, especially if the latter is not inclusive. These core divisions can further advance questions surrounding the government's legitimacy and its ability to provide equally to the needs and expectations of all its citizens. These include equal access to resources

[3] Stephen Sloan and Sean K. Anderson, "Historical Dictionary of Terrorism" Scarecrow Press: Lanham, Maryland, 2006, pp. 137–138.

(especially where natural resources are concentrated in specific areas), development and services, (for example, education) and its ability—or rather inability—to effectively maintain control over the entirety of its territory. Questions surrounding the free expression of opinions and views, possibility of changing government through legitimate means (free and fair elections), and lastly the actions of its security forces (military and police) outside acceptable international standards and civil oversight can further exacerbate the potential for violence (perpetrated by insurgent and terrorist movements/organisations).

Starting with a brief overview of ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts for self-determination the first example refers to Namibia where the Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) attempted to reunite the Lozi people in the Caprivi Strip. This is an enclave in the far north-eastern part if Namibia, between Botswana, Angola, Zambia, and Okavango Region (region between the Kwando, Linyandi, Chobe, and Zambezi rivers) and to fight for the independence of the Caprivi Strip.[4] The CLA came to prominence in October 1998 when the government claimed to have uncovered a rebel training camp. Caprivians, according to Mishake Muyongo, the leader of the CLA, had been marginalised and subjected to unemployment.[5] Meanwhile, Lozis in western Zambia expressed their grievances at the strongly tribal nature of the Chiluba government and crossed into the Caprivi to assist the CLA. Reports were also received that the main attack in 1999 on the Caprivi's capital, Katima Mulilo, was directed from Zambia.[6] Categorised as "terrorists" by the Namibian government, the CLA attacked several targets in Katima Mulilo in August 1999, including the military base at Mpacha, the police station, a local power station, Mpacha airport, the Wenela border post in Zambia and the offices of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation.[7] It also reportedly planned to bomb the Kongola bridge linking Namibia with Zambia.[8]

[4] Gilbert Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons, "African Foreign Policies: Power and Process" Lynne Rienner Publishers 2001, p. 147.

[5] BBC Monitoring Africa, "Caprivi secessionist leader speaks: Support from Zambian faction" 4 August 1999.

[6] Agence France-Presse, "Calm returns to Namibian Caprivi Strip town after rebel attacks" 3 August 1999.

[7] F Jensen, Secessionists attack Namibian Caprivi town, *Reuters News,* 2 August 1999.

[8] C Maletsky, "Fighting erupts in Caprivi," *All Africa*, 3 August 1999.

Fearing reprisals by the government, about 1,100 Caprivian activists went into exile in Botswana from 1998 to 2002. In granting them asylum, Botswana angered the Namibian government, relations with whom were already strained as the result of a dispute over the ownership of Kasikili Island on the border of the Caprivi Strip. Since 1999, 212 Caprivians have been arrested by Namibian authorities. In August 1999 they began prosecuting 67 people on charges of high treason, treason, murder, public violence and sedition. Twelve of the suspects allegedly took part in the 2 August 1999 attacks, while the remaining 55 were accused of aiding the "rebels".[9] In addition, 300 people disappeared after a state of emergency was declared, mass arrests and of women and children being beaten and shot by combined forces of the police, military, and para- military soldiers.[10] Conditions in custody raised suspicion: those arrested were held incommunicado and in January 2000, 35 detainees filed complaints of torture.[11] Amnesty International, in its report on the Caprivi high treason case, revealed pre-trial violations including torture and ill-treatment, poor prison conditions, an initial lack of legal representation, flawed investigations, and denial of bail. It reported that most of the detainees alleged that they had been tortured after their arrests and had been forced to sign "confessions" under torture during interrogation. Amnesty reported that some appeared to have been arrested solely because of their actual or perceived non-violent support for the political opposition in the region, their ethnic identity or their membership of "certain organisations."[12] By 12 November 2003, thirteen suspects had died before proceedings against them could be pursued.[13] In March 2004, approximately 100 men accused of treason for their alleged role in the attacks appeared in court for the first time in four-and-a-half years and

[9] R Reeve, Caprivi Liberation Army, *Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency Centre,* 8 August 2003 and *Agence France-Presse*, Namibia begins prosecuting separatist rebels, 24 August 1999.

[10] Ibid.

[11] *M2 Presswire,* Civilians suffer as Angolan conflict fuels insecurity on the Namibian border, 22 March 2000.

[12] W Menges "Amnesty International slams treason trial delay" *All Africa*, 5 August 2003.

[13] W Menges "11th Treason suspect dies in custody" *All Africa*, 12 November 2003.

pleaded guilty. The case was, however, postponed to 1 June 2004[14] and were only acquitted in 2012.

The Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC) in Angola serves as the second example of ethnic and ethno-religious conflict that called for self-determination. Unlike the Caprivi, the Cabinda region is rich in oil, but similar to the Caprivi, the area geographically can be "isolated" from the larger country. In this case, the DRC separates Cabinda from the rest of Angola. Separatists argued that because Cabinda was administered separately from the rest of Angola in Portuguese colonial times, it should have formed a separate state on independence, but the main reason for the independence drive in Cabinda is economic. Despite having only about 1% of Angola's total population, the enclave generates about 60% of its oil production of over 700 000 barrels per day, which in turn represents some 90% of the country's export earnings. The Cabinda separatists, however, pose no serious threat to Angolan security.[15] The guerrilla campaign was primarily directed against the Angolan government, but activities were also directed against foreigners, especially private oil companies. FLEC-FAC reverted to a strategy of kidnapping Portuguese nationals as the only way to put the Cabinda enclave on the political agenda for negotiations.[16] More concerning was the way the Angolan government responded. According to Amnesty International, government soldiers committed a number of atrocities since the 1990s, including: the torture and deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by soldiers following clashes between the army and armed factions of the FLEC; the abuse of official power by soldiers and police; soldiers and police using torture to obtain information and/or for punishment and intimidation; and the authorities' consistent failure to investigate killings and torture by both police and soldiers.[17]

[14] *All Africa* "Caprivi trial postponed to June" 16 March 2004.

[15] *BBC* "Angola 'offensive' in Cabinda" 20 September 2002 https://ospiti.peacelink.it/anb-bia/week_2k2/020926a.htm.

[16] The New Humanitarian "Cabinda separatists accuse Portugal" 16 January 2001 https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/16718/angola-cabinda-separatists-accuse-portugal.

[17] Amnesty International "Civilians tortured and killed in Cabinda's forgotten war" 29 April 1998 https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/148000/afr120041998en.pdf.

Regarded as a domestic threat in South Africa, right-wing extremist groups and factions were active even before 1994-elections. This reactionary upsurge in right-wing extremism is often associated with a perceived increase in threat to ethnic and/or religious identity (physical security, culture, language, way of life, etc.). Fear that the country may face a change in political direction might further prompt right-wing extremists to act in addition to existing motivating factors including affirmative action, land reform, cultural marginalisation, etc. Instead of one identifiable movement associated with the violent manifestation of right-wing extremism, there exists sporadic "organisations" consisting of a core group of a few individuals that plan and execute their attacks. As a result, it is extremely challenging to provide an accurate assessment of its structure, reach, and activities. The *Boeremag* or Warriors of the Boer Nation or Boer Force claimed responsibility for attacks that included a series of explosive devices detonating on 30 October 2002 in Soweto, near Johannesburg, that resulted in the death of one person and injuries to four more. Another explosive targeted Nun Hua, a Buddhist temple in Bronkhorstspruit, east of Pretoria. The plot is however best known for the planned assassination of Nelson Mandela and attempted overthrow of the African National Congress (ANC) government in a number of attacks that could have led to a number of casualties that potentially included the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the Johannesburg Station, Deutsche Bank in Sandton, and African National Congress headquarters.[18] A number of smaller plots were uncovered since the *Boeremag* trial. Despite this current purely domestic character—actors and targets selected—with an increase of right-wing extremism internationally—there is a growing concern that right-wing extremism may increasingly present a transnational character.

South Africa, similar to other countries in the region, has also been used as a safe haven, transit and staging ground for attacks in other countries. The most notable, not associated with Islamist violent extremism was the 1 October 2010, 50th Independence Day attacks in Nigeria that resulted in the death of twelve people while another thirty-six were injured. On that day, two vehicles exploded in Abuja, Nigeria, within five minutes of each other and a third smaller device detonated in Eagle Square. Upon a request from Nigerian authorities, the South African Police Service (SAPS) raided the residence of Henry Okah, the former

[18] News24 "Boeremag member gets 8yrs" 16 May 2003 https://www.news24.com/News24/Boeremag-member-gets-8yrs-20030516.

leader of Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Johannesburg. Growing up in a wealthy family in Lagos, Okah first raised the alarm in the 1990s for selling firearms in Lagos and despite his background Okah moved his family to South Africa in 2003. Known to authorities, he was also arrested in Angola in September 2007 for purchasing arms and extradited to Nigeria in February 2008. After being released by Nigerian authorities on 13 July 2009, perhaps due to an amnesty agreement, he immediately returned to South Africa. On 4 October 2010 Okah appeared in the magistrate's court in Johannesburg on charges of conspiracy to commit a terrorist act and the detonation of explosive devices in Abuja.[19] While in Nigeria fourteen other suspects were arrested in Nigeria, including Okah's brother, Charles.[20] In March 2013, Okah was found guilty of thirteen terrorism-related charges as well as a thirteen-year sentence for threats made to the South African government after his arrest in October 2010; this will however run concurrently. This case is particularly interesting with Okah standing trial in South Africa under the International Co-operation in Criminal Matters Act, instead of being extradited to Nigeria.[21]

Religiously Motivated Terrorism

The first manifestation of Islamist extremism—although the movement was initially categorised as a vigilante organisation against growing gang problem and drug trade on the Cape Flats in Cape Town—People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) initiated a campaign of urban terrorism in Cape Town between 1996 and 2000. Although PAGAD and affiliated Muslims Against Global Oppression (MAGO) indicated their willingness to target foreign representatives, as manifested in the attack on Planet Hollywood on 25 August 1998, its target selection was predominately domestic. Between July 1996 and December 1997, PAGAD's covert structures targeted alleged drug dealers and their property using pipe-bombs. During this period the more militant faction within PAGAD

[19] BBC News "Henry Okah: Nigerian oil militant jailed for 24 years" 26 March 2013 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21937985.

[20] Voice of America "Nigeria Arrests Okah's Brother" 16 October 2010 https://www.voanews.com/africa/nigeria-arrests-okahs-brother.

[21] BBC News "Henry Okah: Nigerian oil militant jailed for 24 years" 26 March 2013 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21937985.

targeted mosques to gain support from the Muslim community, as well as against former PAGAD members.

From May 1998, the target selection continued to evolve, as Muslim-owned businesses were targeted in June while in July same year, academics and clerics critical of the tactics of PAGAD's G-Force were attacked. Over the same period, members and facilities of the security and intelligence community were targeted using explosives. The nature of attacks indicated that PAGAD was no longer a vigilante group or even a pressure group within the boundaries of legitimate dissent, instead the selection of targets reflected a campaign of urban terrorism and a shift in strategic objectives.

The number of bombings declined between 1998 and 1999 as terror attacks were no longer directed at drug dealers and gangsters but instead at public places and places of entertainment. The change in target selection was accompanied by changes in the explosive devices used in attacks on police stations and restaurants during this period. For example, the introduction of mobile phones as remote controlled detonators and VBIEDs parked along busy public streets reflected a new level of sophistication. Unlike the pipe bombs that were used during its intimidation strategy against drug dealers, the new form of bombings in 1999 were nothing less than indiscriminate acts of terrorism against the public at large.

At the end of the campaign in 2000, ammonium nitrate was used as a component with traces of fertiliser detected at the following attacks: Constantia Shopping Centre, the Bronx nightclub, Heerengracht Street near the US Consulate in Cape Town, and in the Obz Café bombings. Irrespective of the fact that the violent activities of PAGAD came to a standstill in 2000 (before 9/11), the population in Western Cape witnessed a number of activities in June 2007 that led to speculation of PAGAD's return. For example, on 18 June, approximately 300 community members took to the streets and targeted eight suspected drug outlets in Mitchell's Plain. The following day, community members (estimated at 2000) gathered at a local mosque (angered by speculation that Tik dealers attacked a mosque in Beacon valley) marched to a luxury double story house of a suspected Tik dealer and set the residence on fire. Angry

community members further overturned a vehicle before police dispersed the crowd using stun grenades and rubber bullets.[22]

In 2014, the PAGAD returned but not in the format known for its campaign of urban terror in the late 1990s and the start of the 2000s but more as an organised voice to community frustrations. For instance, on 26 February 2020, community members—some of them known members of PAGAD—set the residences of five suspected drug dealers alight in Ocean View, Cape Town in response to the killing of Emaan Solomons (7-year old) in gang crossfire two days earlier.[23]

The end of the apartheid regime in South Africa which was accompanied by a sudden opening of the country and diminishing control of the security apparatus led to an increase of all types of crimes. However, this overwhelming sense of hope is sometimes considered to have contributed to the country's vulnerability to crimes and utility as safe haven for both international criminals and terrorist suspects. Consequently, using South Africa as a "rear base" increasingly appeared less far-fetched. For instance, on 5 October 1999, a Tanzanian national identified as Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, was arrested in Cape Town where he fled to in the aftermath of the August 1998 bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. According to Mary Jo White, the then US attorney for the Southern District of New York, Mohamed had "direct operational responsibility for the Tanzanian bombing [as he] rented a house in Dar es-Salaam that was allegedly used as the base of operations and bomb factory. He is also charged with purchasing the white Suzuki Samurai that was allegedly used as a utility vehicle by the conspirators during the preparation stage of the plot."[24] In a related incident, another al-Qaeda operative of Tanzanian nationality implicated in the same attack, Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, was arrested in Pakistan along with South African nationals, Feroze Abu Bakar Ganchi and Zoubair Ismael in 2004.

Furthermore, a Pakistani national, Saud Memon, who was implicated in the February 2002 beheading of an American journalist in Pakistan identified as Daniel Pearl was allegedly "picked up" by US officials in

[22] Marius Louw, "Tik dealer's" home torched, *Die Burger,* 20 June 2007.

[23] Aron Hyman "Homes of 'drug dealers' torched after murder of Cape Town girl," 7 Sowetan Live, 27 February 2020 https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-02-27-homes-of-drug-dealers-torched-after-murder-of-cape-town-girl-7/.

[24] Laynne Duke "Embassy Bombing Suspect Pleads Not Guilty" *The Washington Post*, 9 October 1999 https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/terror/terrorism.htm.

South Africa on 7 March 2003 from where he "disappeared" till he was dumped in his neighbourhood in Pakistan in 2007. At this time, he was unable to recognise his family and could not speak. Twenty days later, Memon died in hospital. According to a report by CAGE Africa**,** Memon left Pakistan for South Africa shortly after the death of Daniel Pearl, where he was seized by the FBI in March 2003. He was allegedly kept in Guantanamo Bay for two years before being handed over to the Pakistani intelligence services, "notorious for their human-rights abuses". Karen Jayes, then-spokesperson for CAGE Africa noted that "Memon was taken from South Africa, detained, and tortured [while] there was no definitive proof that linked him to Pearl's death. There were periods where his location was unknown, so some of this detention and torture may have taken place at the two known black sites in South Africa."[25] Reports around this incident indicates that Memon who was in the textiles industry at the time of his disappearance had been on business in South Africa. He was allegedly identified by several arrested members of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen Al-Almi as their main financial supporter. He also allegedly owned the shed in which the body of Pearl was discovered. According to the trust deed retrieved from two banks, Memon was one of the eleven trustees of the Al-Akhtar Trust International with alleged links to the Taliban and al-Qaeda (the US Treasury Department listed the trust in 2003).[26]

According to US trial records, Oussama Abdullah Kassir, alias "Abu Abdullah" and "Abu Khadija", a Lebanese-born but emigrated to Sweden in 1984 where he became a citizen (convicted on 9 May 2009 and sentenced to life imprisonment in New York)[27] conspired with Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, Haroon Rashid Aswat, and Earnest James Ujaama to

[25] CAGE "Saud Memon's detention, torture and death shows clear South African complicity" 29 December 2014 https://www.cage.ngo/saud-memons-detention-torture-and-death-shows-clear-south-african-complicity#:~:text=Saud%20Memon's%20detention%2C%20torture%20and%20death%20shows%20clear%20South%20African%20complicity,-December%2029th%2C%202014&text=Johannesburg%20%E2%80%93%20Saud%20Memon%2C%20a%20man,CIA%20between%202002%20and%202008.

[26] Daily Times "Link found between Pearl's killers, Muslim charity" 29 August 2009 https://www.webcitation.org/query?url=http://www.dailytimes.com.pk%2Fdefault.asp%3Fpage%3Dstory_19-4-2005_pg7_29&date=2009-08-29.

[27] The Intercept "Oussama Kassir" https://trial-and-terror.theintercept.com/people/feb8c1d3-278f-474f-95e8-7771e9ac6a54.

establish a jihadist training camp in Bly, Oregon in 1999.[28] The latter was formerly known as James Earnest Thompson, but changed his name after his conversion to Islam in the 1990s. Ujaama lived in London before 9/11 where he became a follower of Abu Hamza al-Masri[29] and made a pitch to al-Masri to establish a safe haven, recruit and provide training at this remote military training camp in the US. According to the US indictment "the purpose of the Bly jihad training camp was to provide a place where Muslims could receive various types of training, including military-style jihad training, in preparation for a community of Muslims to move to Afghanistan. Once in Afghanistan, the men in the community would have gained enough familiarity with weapons at the Bly jihad training camp to fight jihad or to continue with additional jihad training in Afghanistan."[30]

The indictment against Ujaama also included helping to run a website, "Supporters of Shariah" that was used to advocate violence against the United States and for installing software on computers in Afghanistan belonging to Taliban officials.[31] According to court records Kassir and Haroon Rashid Aswat, a UK citizen and al-Qaeda trainer, arrived at the ranch in December 1999. Aswat allegedly brought homemade training CDs with instructions on how to make bombs and poisons to Oregon. After the attempted training camp in Oregon failed, Kassir and Aswat left for a mosque in Seattle and tried taking the training to the Muslims who did not want to move to Bly, but that also failed. Aswat later would spend time in an al-Qaeda safe house in Pakistan; his visit recorded in a ledger containing Aswat's name and bearing the fingerprints of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, recovered at an alleged al-Qaeda safe house in Pakistan in

[28] Associated Press "Trial record provides account of Oregon jihad camp" Komo News, 18 October 2009 https://komonews.com/news/local/trial-record-provides-account-of-oregon-jihad-camp.

[29] Hal Bernton and Mike Carter "Seattle man helped Brits find man tied to London terror plots" The Seattle Times, 21 December 2014 https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattle-man-helped-brits-find-man-tied-to-london-terror-plots/.

[30] Department of Justice "United States Announces Extradition of Accused Terrorist from Czech Republic" 25 September 2007 https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/September/07_nsd_760.html.

[31] Colin Moynihan "Terror Suspect's Aid in Other Cases Spares Him More Prison" The New York Times, 23 October 2015 https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/24/nyregion/terror-suspects-unprecedented-aid-in-other-cases-spares-him-more-prison.html.

2002.[32] The US arrest warrant shows that "between 1 October 1999 and 30 April 2000, Aswat conspired with others to control and manage people who would be employed for 'the use or display of physical force in promoting a political object, namely to make *hijrah* to, and to fight jihad in, Afghanistan."[33] Linking Aswat to the 7 July 2005 attacks in London, the allegation was that during his stay in London, Aswat visited the home towns of all four bombers as well as selecting targets. He arrived in Britain a fortnight before the bombings to orchestrate final planning and spoke to the suicide attackers on his mobile phone a few hours before they executed the attacks that shook Britain.[34]

After leaving Britain, Aswat stayed in South Africa for several weeks before being arrested in Zambia on 20 July 2005 after entering the country from Botswana.[35] Prior to his arrest he had lived in Johannesburg for five months. What raised concern was that the four suicide bombers responsible for the 7/7 bombings in London called Aswat twenty times on his South African cell phone. At the time of his arrest he was travelling on a South African passport. According to a business associate in Vrededorp, he knew Aswat for approximately two years and described him as "very secretive about his life" but he never expressed radical sentiments as "he never spoke to anybody about anything except for business—the Islamic CDs and DVDs that he was selling at flea markets in Fordsburg."[36] Although Aswat made a meagre living while in South Africa, he visited Mozambique and Botswana (considering that he travelled via

[32] Christopher M. Matthews. "U.K. Extradites Terror Suspect to U.S." The Wall Street Journal, 21 October 2014 https://www.wsj.com/articles/terror-suspect-extradited-to-u-s-by-u-k-1413925444?tesla=y.

[33] Tom McTaghue "Abu Hamza's Yorkshire 'conspirator' extradited to the US over claims he set up Jihad training camp" *Daily Mail Online*, 21 October 2014 https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2801996/abu-hamza-s-yorkshire-conspirator-extradited-claims-set-jihad-training-camp.html.

[34] *The Sydney Morning Herald* "Suspected bomb mastermind caught" 20 July 2005 https://www.smh.com.au/world/suspected-bomb-mastermind-caught-20050722-gdlqce.html.

[35] Dow Jones International News, "London Attacks Show Global Reach of Terrorism" 31 July 2005.

[36] BBC Monitoring Africa "South African police said investigating presence of Al-Qa'idah cells" 4 August 2005.

Botswana to Zambia where he was arrested) regularly, raising questions around his financial means.[37]

In another case study, Mohammed Gulzar, one of eight suspects that were charged for the "Transatlantic Plot" of 2006 which involved planning to detonate homemade explosive devices mid-air on flights from Britain en route to San Francisco, Toronto, Montreal, Washington, New York, and Chicago. The plot involved smuggling Tang energy drinks combined with hydrogen peroxide (to be assembled and detonated mid-air) by a team of suicide bombers. In the end, Abdulla Ahmed Ali (the operational leader), Assad Sarwar, Tanvir Hussain, Ibrahim Savant, Arafat Waheed Khan, and Waheed Zaman were convicted, but Gulzar was acquitted.[38] The investigators in the plot noted that Gulzar entered Britain with his newlywed wife on a flight from South Africa on 18 July 2006 using the name of Altaf Ravat after he had lived in South Africa for a few years.[39] His fake passport also showed a one-day trip to Swaziland on 13 July 2006.

Rashid Rauf, the mastermind of the Transatlantic plot was arrested with a forged South African passport in Pakistan in August 2006 but managed to escape in December 2007. Rauf had dual British and Pakistani citizenship and was married to a relative of Maulana Masood Azhar, the head and founder of Jaish-e-Mohammed, an Islamist militant group in Pakistan that is also linked to al-Qaeda. Rauf was reportedly killed by a US drone attack in Pakistan in November 2008. Gulzar and Rauf have an interesting history with the two being childhood friends living in Birmingham and both left for the same university where they had been involved in Islamic societies including attending Tablighi Jamaat sessions in 2000. In April 2002, Rauf left for Pakistan when he was

[37] Alexandra Zavis "Southern Africa is a growing terrorist hideout, potential al-Qaida base" Associated Press, 5 September 2005.

[38] Press Association "Three men found guilty for plotting to murder hundreds of people" The Guardian, 8 July 2010 https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jul/08/three-guilty-terrorism-airline-plot.

[39] The Irish Times "Bomb plot accused posed as newlywed" 8 April 2008 https://www.irishtimes.com/news/bomb-plot-accused-posed-as-newlywed-1.820916.

declared wanted for questioning over the murder of Mohammed Saeed. It is in Pakistan that Rauf's advances in extremism are well recorded.[40]

In addition, South African passports have been in the news for all the wrong reasons in recent years, as highlighted in above examples where foreign nationals with alleged extremists were arrested with a South African passport after spending relatively short periods of time in South Africa. Most notable instances where South African passports were mentioned are those of Ihsan Garnaoui, a Tunisian al-Qaeda suspect, who told German investigators that he had a number of South African passports. At the time of his arrest in January 2003, Garnaoui travelled on a forged Portuguese passport when he arrived in Germany, on a journey via South Africa and Belgium. He was accused of planning bombings on American and Jewish targets to coincide with the start of the US-led war in Iraq.

The German prosecutors that handled the case noted that Garnaoui rented a van, which normally would not raise suspicion, but it happened just hours after the US military invaded Iraq. Though there was nothing in the van, investigators found a pistol, chemicals for making explosives, and mobile phones accessories that could be used to detonate explosives as well as evidence of training materials from Afghanistan in Garnaoui's apartment. In the end, they were forced to settle for smaller charges for petty crimes including tax evasion, obtaining a false passport and possession of a firearm without a licence.[41]

In another case, Ibrahim Tantoush, originally wanted by Libyan authorities for stealing gold to fund al-Qaeda, used a false South African passport while *en route* from Malaysia to Australia. Tantoush however denied the allegation of stealing gold to fund al-Qaeda, rather arguing that between 1983 and 1987, he was involved in student protests against Muammar Gaddafi and was wanted for that reason. While standing trial before the Pretoria magistrate's court, Tantoush gave the following explanation:

[40] Raffaello Pantucci "A Biography of Rashid Rauf: Al-Qa'ida's British Operative" Combating Terrorism Centre July 2012, Volume 5, Issue 7 https://ctc.usma.edu/a-biography-of-rashid-rauf-al-qaidas-british-operative/.

[41] Spiegel International "Terror Suspect Gets Minimum Conviction" 7 April 2005 https://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel-s-daily-take-terror-suspect-gets-minimum-conviction-a-350143.html.

> Libyans were particularly unwelcome in Australia because of Libya's support for terrorist organisations. The only way that I could get to Australia was on a non-Libyan passport. An Iraqi arranged a false South African passport for me, and in the middle of 2003, I left Malaysia to go to Australia via Indonesia. I was arrested when I was alone in a marketplace in Indonesia on suspicion of being in the country illegally and deported to South Africa in November 2003.[42]

On 8 June 2011, Radio Mogadishu, which initially reported on the shooting incident at a checkpoint in Mogadishu identified Fazul Abdullah Mohammed first as Abdurrahman Canadian. Upon closer investigation, it was confirmed that Mohammed, al-Qaeda's leader in East Africa—a position he held since the announcement by Osama bin Laden in November 2009—was the last to be dealt with amongst the three al-Qaeda operatives wanted for their involvement in the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Earlier in 2007, Abu Tahla al-Sudani was killed while fighting Ethiopian forces and in September 2009, US Special Operations Forces killed Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan during a raid south of Mogadishu.[43] The death of Mohammed however raised questions when on 11 June then-Somali information minister, Abdulkareem Jama, confirmed that Fazul was carrying a South African passport "in the name of Daniel Robinson" and was carrying more than $40,000. The passport was issued on 13 April 2009 and the bearer left South Africa for Tanzania on March 19 and was granted a visa there.[44] On 17 June 2011, Mkuseli Apleni, then-Home Affairs Director-General, issued a statement announcing that: "The department launched an investigation into the matter in collaboration with relevant law enforcement agencies, including cooperation with SA's diplomatic mission in Kenya [that so far revealed that the passport was fake and not issued by] any lawful South African authority with the responsibility for the issuance of passports" and that

[42] Estelle Ellis "Is man in SA Bin Laden's banker?" *Independent Online*, 21 April 2004 https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/is-man-in-sa-bin-ladens-banker-211006.

[43] Bill Roggio "Al Qaeda's East Africa chief Fazul Mohammed killed in Somalia" Foundation for Defense of Democracies Long War Journal, 11 June 2011. https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/06/al_qaedas_east_afric_1.php.

[44] Jeffrey Gettleman "Somalis Kill Mastermind of 2 U.S. Embassy Bombings" The New York Times, 11 June 2011 https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/world/africa/12somalia.html.

"the South African movement control system has no record of any movement in or out of the country at any of our ports of entry by Fazul, using the fake passport".[45]

It is, however, important to note that using international passports that were legally or illegally obtained by criminals and terrorists as a way to prevent scrutiny is a practice not limited to South Africa. In early July 2017, it was published that due to "systemic corruption in Malawi's immigration department, non-citizens now have access to fraudulently obtained passports, visas, work permits, and identity documents, all at a price."[46] Like South Africa, there exists the consideration has been that South African and now Malawian nationals are not high on the list of individuals associated with violent extremism and terrorism. As to be expected, as soon as one opportunity closes, another will present itself. In one example, Vincent Murekezi who was convicted for his part in the Rwandan genocide was arrested with two Malawian passports bearing different names. Murekezi hid in both Zimbabwe and Malawi. In addition to Rwandan refugees after the 1994 genocide, a Pakistan human trafficker bribed seven officials with $1,500 to let Bangladeshi nationals into Malawi. Malawian passports are a favourite commodity for Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals. Bringing all together, a syndicate involving high-ranked officers, the former home affairs minister in Joyce Banda's administration, Uladi Mussa; the former chief of immigration, Hudson Mankhwala; and David Kwanjana, former chief citizenship officer, facilitated travel of Bangladesh and Pakistan nationals to South Africa through Chileka and Kamuzu airports in Malawi, but also through Mozambique. Similarly, a Nigerian national using the name Vincent Banda (Malawian name) was arrested in South Africa while travelling to the United Kingdom on a Malawian passport that was expected to be one of 250 passports the then-head of Immigration, Masauko Medi had signed off on a consignment of blank passports from the company

[45] Mail & Guardian "Terrorists favour 'easy' fake SA passports" 17 June 2011 https://mg.co.za/article/2011-06-17-terrorists-favour-easy-fake-sa-passports/.

[46] Mail & Guardian "False Passport and Permit Scam in Malawi Probed" 4 July 2017 https://mg.co.za/article/2017-07-04-false-passport-and-permit-scam-in-malawi-probed/.

Technobrain. Another lower-ranked officer later refused to sign for the defective consignment.[47]

Current and Emerging Threats in Southern Africa

Although active or dormant domestic terror organisations might have previously focused their attention on domestic grievances and targets, a number of nationals from countries in the region—particularly South Africa—had been implicated in suspicious activities under the strangest of circumstances abroad, raising growing concerns that individuals associated with Islamist extremism in fact managed to establish a presence and used existing domestic circumstances to position itself as referred to above. The question being will this eroding sense of belonging and national identity increase vulnerability to not only be a base to launch and facilitate acts of terrorism from, but also whether countries in the region, while still under a false sense of security become the target of attacks.

In an interesting case study, Feroze Abu Bakar Ganchi and Zoubair Ismael were arrested on 25 July 2004 in Gujarat situated in eastern Pakistan along with Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a Tanzanian al-Qaeda operative wanted for his involvement in the 1998 US embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. According to Pakistani authorities, the two South Africans had admitted that they were plotting attacks in South Africa, but the government flatly denied the reports. Ganchi had bragged in private to colleagues that he knew many al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan personally. In December 2004, Ganchi and Zoubair were on the road again. They were arrested in Conakry, Guinea on their way to Sierra Leone. In January 2005 Ganchi and Zoubair were spotted in Indonesia and they were arrested again in March 2005 when they tried to cross the border with East Timo. This time the pair were accompanied by Muhsin al-Fadhli, who would go on to become one of the leaders of the Khorassan unit of al-Qaeda in Syria, where he was killed in 2015. Ganchi was arrested again in 2009, this time in Egypt when he was on his way to Gaza.[48]

[47] amaBhungane "False passport and permit scam in Malawi probed" Daily Maverick, 4 July 2017 https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-07-04-amabhungane-false-passport-and-permit-scam-in-malawi-probed/#gsc.tab=0.

[48] European Eye on Radicalization "South Africa: A Rear Base for Jihadis"11 April 2018 https://eeradicalization.com/south-africa-a-rear-base-for-jihadis/.

Additionally, South Africa has become an attractive country for recruitment for causes abroad. Breaking the traditional perception that the most vulnerable come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates in Africa managed to recruit individuals from average income families as this reduces the financial burden on the organisation.[49] In this context, most of the recruits are able to organise their own travel arrangements, though some still require financial and technical support. Using social media sites, as being used in the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in other countries around the world, ISIL aired a 20-minute video entitled, "Eid Greetings from the Land of Khilafah", in August 2014. In this video, foreign fighters from Belgium, South Africa, and the US urged their countrymen (and women) to join the jihad in Syria. In this particular video, the alleged South African citizen in Syria identified himself as Abu Shuiab al-Afriki.[50]

In November 2014, additional allegations of ISIL recruitment amongst South African nationals reached the news in that 140 South Africans had been recruited to Syria and Iraq. The Ambassador of Iraq to South Africa confirmed the reports and further indicated that three of the recruits had been killed and their bodies had been repatriated to South Africa. According to Ambassador Al-Alawi, the deceased included a 26-year-old from Vereeniging, a 54-year-old man from Cape Town, and a 24-year-old man, who "was recruited by a group in Gauteng that uses the slogan of supporting refugees and orphans. The deceased had travelled with a group of young men from Azaadville and Lenasia".[51] Since 2015, reports of IS presence and recruitment in South Africa to ISIL have become more regular. For example, in March news reported that two individuals going by the names Abu Hurayra (aged 18), and Abu Layth Al-Hindi (aged 25), have proclaimed that they arrived in the caliphate and although circumstances were described as difficult that "by

[49] The IS affiliates in Africa are Islamic State in West Africa or the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWA or ISWAP) and the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) which operates closer to Southern Africa.

[50] Jan Cronje "'SA' man appears in Islamic State video" IOL, 16 August 2014 https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/sa-man-appears-in-islamic-state-video-1736452#, http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/sa-man-appears-in-islamic-state-video-1.1736452%23.VSQnymaczV0.

[51] News24 "ISIS recruiting in SA—report" 23 November 2014 https://www.news24.com/News24/ISIS-recruiting-in-SA-report-20141123#, http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/ISIS-recruiting-in-SA-report-20141123.

the will of Allah, you can overcome anything."[52] Both men had set up social media accounts to assist other South Africans who wanted to make this journey, to travel to Syria. The reporter in the same article made reference to a step-by-step guide on how South Africans can travel via Turkey to Syria (the caliphate's headquarters).[53] A month later, in April 2015 it was confirmed that recruiters did not exclusively target men, but also South African young girls when police intercepted a fifteen-year old South African girl (originally from Cape Town), who was *en route* to join ISIL.[54] In an interview with the author in 2016, she explained that she decided not to leave for the caliphate to become a bride (as commonly reported in international reporting of the time), but to play a more active role in being a member of Hisba.[55] Hisba (or ihtisab) an Arabic term is associated with the principle of "reckoning" or "accounting". In reference to Islamic law (Shari'a), it refers to the activities of state-appointed individuals (usually termed muhtasib) or within groups such as the Taliban and IS and affiliated groups who enforces the law in both the public and private spheres.[56] In ISIL, the al-Khansaa brigade enforces the organisation's strict interpretation of Islamic law. Feared by both members and civilians in ISIL controlled territories, the al-Khansaa brigade included many foreign girls.[57] For example, in 2015, Shamima Begum, a British citizen, left Bethnal Green with two other schoolgirls.[58]

[52] Nabeelah Shaikh "The SA men in Islamic State" IOL, 1 March 2015 https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/the-sa-men-in-islamic-state-1825183#http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/the-sa-men-in-islamic-state-1.1825183%23.VSQqVWaczV0.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Marilia Brocchetto "South Africa detains teen girl en route to join ISIS, official says" CNN, 7 April 2015 https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/07/world/south-africa-teen-girl-join-isis/#.

[55] "Author's interview with the ISIL recruit and her parents" 20 February 2016.

[56] "Hisbah" https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/hisba.

[57] Natasha Culzac "Isis: British women led by Aqsa Mahmood 'running sharia police unit for Islamic State in Syria'" Independent, 8 September 2014 https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-british-women-running-sharia-police-unit-for-islamic-state-in-syria-9717510.html.

[58] Richard Hall and Lizzie Dearden "Shamima Begum 'was member of feared Isis morality police' in Syria" Independent, 14 April 2019 https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/shamima-begum-isis-syria-morality-police-suicide-belts-a8869016.html.

It is however not only individuals being radicalised, but also families, such as the Moosagie family of Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape—consisting of Mufti Rashid Moosagie, an Islamic educator, his wife, daughter, two sons, a daughter-in-law, and a grandchild—who left in January 2015 and were believed to be in Raqqa, Syria. It is this same family who asked for assistance from the South African government for the return of their son Eesa, who was critically wounded. It is however this same Eesa who in a Facebook post bragged how he had "beheaded an infidel" in Mosul, Iraq, in November 2015.[59] In another example, Bilal Cajee (38), had been killed in the battle for Palmyra end-March 2016. Cajee was originally from Roshnee in Vereeniging where he worked as a manager at a Benoni store before leaving the country in September 2015, explaining to friends and family that he left for a new job in Qatar in the United Arab Emirates with his wife, Saffiya.[60]

In addition to recruiting South African nationals to serve as FTFs, the threat and potential consequences of recruitment to security in South Africa became a reality in July 2016 as 23-year-old twins, Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie were arrested along with siblings Fatima and Ibrahim Mohammed Patel, in Azaadville and Newclare in Johannesburg.[61] The arrests were made following a 10-month investigation into alleged plots to launch attacks against the US Embassy, UK High Commission, the South African Zionist Federation (responsible for coordinating all the Zionist activities throughout the country and based in Johannesburg, with additional branches in Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth), King David High School and arms manufacturer Denel.

According to Hangwani Mulaudzi, the then-spokesperson for the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation or commonly referred to as the Hawks, the two brothers planned to join the so-called Islamic State. The Thulsie twins (according to the press statement) had been on the

[59] Nabeelah Shaikh "Family want Isis executioner brought home to SA" Sunday Tribune, 5 June 2016 http://mini.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/news/family-want-isis-executioner-brought-home-to-sa-2030592.

[60] Nabeelah Shaikh "SA man killed fighting for Islamic State" IOL, 3 April 2016 https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/sa-man-killed-fighting-for-islamic-state-2004423.

[61] European Jewish Press "Four South Africans arrested for planning attacks on Jewish institutions in Pretoria" 13 July 2016 http://ejpress.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56087&catid=26.

radar of the Hawks since 2015 after they had tried to leave the country twice, first through OR Tambo International Airport and again through Mozambique to join ISIL in Syria. The Hawks admitted that they were previously successful in stopping individuals from travelling abroad, but this was the first arrest linked to Islamic State.[62] The twins were charged with 12 counts relating to contraventions of POCDATARA and fraud for the alleged use of fake passports. At the time of preparing this chapter (June 2020) they had been awaiting trial for four years (predominantly due to delay tactics by the defence). In addition to previously mentioned targets, other alleged targets listed included cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro (known as Zapiro) and Roy Topol, Jewish South African Investment Manager.[63]

It is important to note that the information obtained between November 2015 and June 2016 in the Thulsie investigation facilitated the search warrants on the residence where the twins were believed to be staying. Another warrant was for Renaldo Smith who revealed during the search that Tony-Lee was "Simba". Simba was the alias the twins used on numerous posts on various Facebook accounts pledging their support for ISIS. Further investigations also established that Simba communicated with a high-ranking ISIS member, asking for permission to conduct a terror attack in South Africa. At the time, Smith agreed to turn state witness.[64] However, on 15 August 2016, Smith said he was forced into giving that evidence and is trying to recant it.[65] It is shortly after this hearing that Smith jumped the fence into Mozambique to again feature in a photo as part of a statement IS claimed—for the first time—that it has been responsible for an attack in northern Mozambique (after two years of attacks in the Cabo Delgado): "The soldiers of the Caliphate were able

[62] Susan Njanji "South African brothers charged with terrorism, accused of planning attacks against US embassy and Jewish institutions" Mail & Guardian, 12 July 2016 https://mg.co.za/article/2016-07-12-sa-in-islamic-state-first-as-twins-accused-over-us-embassy-plot/.

[63] *Independent Online* "Thulsie twins back in dock for Isis-linked terror plot" 27 October 2017 https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/thulsie-twins-back-in-dock-for-isis-linked-terror-plot-11735572.

[64] Wim Pretorius "Terror accused twin communicated with ISIS, court told" News24, 1 August 2016 https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/terror-accused-twin-communicated-with-isis-court-told-20160801.

[65] ENCA "Thulsie twins to fight arrest in high court" 15 August 2016 https://www.enca.com/south-africa/thulsie-twins-to-fight-arrest-in-high-court.

to repulse an attack by the Crusader Mozambican army in Metubi village, in the Mocimboa area". Although Smith was not identified by name, he and three other fighters, armed with a variety of weapons, stood in front of an IS flag.[66]

On 10 May 2018, three armed men with knives, firearms, and an incendiary device entered the Imam Hussain mosque in Verulam immediately after midday prayers. Imam Essop of the Shia mosque was tied up and thrown to his knees and his throat was slit (fatally wounding him). This attack demonstrated the commitment of the zealots to execute attacks on South African soil while also making it a reality. The assailants further attacked Muhammad Ali, the muezzin and caretaker, and another worshipper who was stabbed in the abdomen and the other in the groin.[67] Farhad Hoomer, a businessman and ringleader of the alleged IS cell (eleven men accused) was charged with involvement in the Verulam mosque attack and attempted bombings around Durban. In a search on Hoomer's residence, suspected to be responsible for a series of attacks in Verulam, police found copies of *Rumiyah*, a known Islamic State magazine together with eight ISIS flags. The relevant articles referred to a series in the magazine on how individuals and small cells can execute attacks in their home countries using arson and knives. An article in the said *Rumiyah* magazine was dedicated to the use of fire as modus operandi: "Ideal target locations for arson include houses and apartment buildings… as well as churches, Rafidi temples, and so forth. The options are vast, leaving no excuse for delay."[68]

In an earlier issue of *Rumiyah,* there were detailed instruction on the type of knives that should be used for various forms of killing, including decapitation.[69] According to the prosecutor, Hoomer's home was used as a "training facility" for the Islamic State-inspired acts of violence. It

[66] Defence Web "Islamic State claims presence in Mozambique" 7 June 2019 https://www.defenceweb.co.za/security/national-security/islamic-state-claims-presence-in-mozambique/.

[67] Agence France Presse "South Africa Shia mosque attacked with guns, petrol bombs; Imam killed, 2 others injured" Hindustan Times, 11 May 2018 https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/attackers-slit-throats-of-worshippers-at-south-africa-mosque-1-dead/story-El3p00Cb7IAzAnTj9FFXnK.html.

[68] *Rumiyah*, Issue 5, 6 January 2017, URL: http://clarionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Rumiyah-ISIS-Magazine-5th-issue.pdf.

[69] [] *Rumiyah*, Issue 2, 4 October 2016, pp. 12–13, URL: http://clarionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Rumiyh-ISIS-Magazine-2nd-issue.pdf.

was also from Hoomer's property that a kidnapped Tanzanian man was rescued after being held for several weeks (reason not made available). The national leader of South Africa's minority Shi'a community, Moulana Aftab Haider, was convinced after the mosque attack that the Islamic State had played some role: "This is a terrorist crime. It is an attack on the sanctity of a place of worship and, furthermore, it is the indiscriminate killing of innocent people purely based upon their religious beliefs. This has all the hallmarks of the Islamic State style of operation in Iraq and Syria."[70] According to Azad Seedat, the chairperson of the mosque (the only Shia mosque in KwaZulu-Natal) this was a well thought through attack—the assailants visited the mosque on three occasions when it was quiet, prayed, and then took literature and books—and was part of a historic conflict between Sunni (Islamic State) and Shia Muslims "they petrol-bombed not only the mosque's library but a room containing scaled-down models of shrines to our imams. The attacks had all the hallmarks of Takfirism (declaring other Muslim heretics) as the slitting of throats is how Takfiris execute their victims."[71]

On 10 February 2018, Rodney (aged 74) and Rachel Saunders (aged 63), two British nationals were kidnapped in Ngoye Forest Reserve near Mtunzini, 130 kilometres north of Durban. The two had been in South Africa as botanists at Silverhill Seeds in Kenilworth. Sayfydeen Del Vecchio (aged 38) and Fatima Patel (aged 27) were arrested on 15 February 2018 to face charges of kidnapping, murder, and robbery, and Thembamandla Xulu (aged 19) for being in possession of the couple's mobile phones.[72] A fourth suspect in the case, Ahmed Jackson Mussa (aged 36), known as "Bazooka", was arrested on 22 March 2018. Evidence before the court indicated discussions between Del Vecchio, Patel, and Mussa for "preparing to kill the *kuffar* (non-believer) that ended in murdering the couple and dumping their bodies in the Thukela River. Police alleged that Del Vecchio and Patel had Islamic State links. Fatima Patel was

[70] Rebecca Davis "State cites ISIS in Durban trial—but experts urge extreme care" Daily Maverick, 24 October 2018 https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-10-24-state-cites-isis-in-durban-trial-but-experts-urge-extreme-care/#gsc.tab=0.

[71] Sunday Tribune "Shia hate 'led to #MosqueAttack'" IOL, 13 May 2018 https://www.iol.co.za/sunday-tribune/news/shia-hate-led-to-mosqueattack-14950713.

[72] Mike Behr "British TV host grilled over couple allegedly kidnapped by IS pair in KZN" Cape Argus, 24 March 2018 https://www.iol.co.za/weekend-argus/british-tv-host-grilled-over-couple-allegedly-kidnapped-by-is-pair-in-kzn-14032066.

allegedly already on the radar of security forces since she was at the time of the attack out on bail for a July 2016 counterterrorism raid in which Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie were also arrested."[73] Whether directly linked or part of a decentralised network, it is worth mentioning that *Rumiyah* magazine (already mentioned in the 2018 Verulam attacks) featured an article in its ninth issue on how kidnapping and hostage-taking can be used to achieve a number of objectives. This ranges from extorting ransom money to fund the organisation and other activities, not for personal financial gain. Kidnapping and hostage-taking could also be used for to propaganda purposes, particularly when hostages are being executed and the video material distributed on the Internet.[74]

Dutch intelligence authorities in July arrested Mohammed Ghorshid for trying to buy bitcoins (the preferred currency of terrorist financing) with a credit card belonging to Rachel Saunders. Ghorshid was on the watchlist of Dutch intelligence because of his Islamic State links. The credit card connected Ghorshid with Sayefudeen Del Vecchio and Fatima Patel. According to Dutch investigators Ghorshid was also in contact with Abu Fida, also known as Mohammed Abdi Ali, the highest ranking IS spokesman in Africa. Abu Fida was arrested in Kenya in 2016 and according to information from the FBI, received direct instructions from the ISIS leadership in Syria. According to Dutch prosecutors, Ghorshid knew two of the Saunders' kidnappers in South Africa and also worked with a Somali-based suspect.[75]

Similar to the 50th Independence Day attacks in Nigeria, South Africa was again implicated in the planning of a terrorist attack in another African country, this time the Dusit attack in Nairobi on 15/16 January 2019. In August of that year, Kenyan investigators—namely the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), a Criminal Intelligence Unit officer attached to Safaricom and a prosecutor from the Office of the Director of

[73] Times Live "Police probe ISIS link in disappearance of Cape Town couple" The Rep, 20 February 2018 https://www.therep.co.za/2018/02/20/police-probe-isis-link-disappearance-cape-town-couple/.

[74] *Rumiyah*, Issue 9, 4 May 2017 https://qb5cc3pam3y2ad0tm1zxuhho-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Rumiyah-9.pdf.

[75] AFP "Dutch jihadist suspect 'involved' in South African kidnapping—reports" News24, 27 August 2018 https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/dutch-jihadist-suspect-involved-in-south-african-kidnapping-reports-20180827.

Public Prosecutions–were in South Africa to follow-up in multiple transactions accumulating to an estimated $22 million transferred from a bank in Cape Town to a Kenyan bank, before being withdrawn via mobile money at various outlets. One of the leaders of the Dusit attack had registered 70 mobile money transfers to numbers from which he and his accomplices would withdraw money for the purchase of weapons, to pay for surveillance of intended target(s), purchasing or hiring vehicles to move around and pay rent for the places they lived in, and possibly to bribe authorities. Investigations revealed that Hassan Abdi Nur, one of the suspects had 52 M-Pesa agency accounts (mobile money) and received money over three months from South Africa which was later withdrawn at a bank in Eastleigh, before it was wired to Somalia.[76] Of the 52 M-Pesa accounts, 47 were registered between October and December 2018, each with a SIM card used in two handsets that were geo-located to the Eastleigh area, Nairobi.[77] Hassan Nur used different IDs to register the SIM cards. Kenyan nationals, one living in Cape Town and another who was said to be a refugee in Pretoria, were implicated as part of a terror sleeper cell and a major financier of al-Shabaab. Further investigations in Kenya established links between the al-Shabaab in Kenya with South Africa as one of the biggest local recruiters for the group was a man from Malindi, with vast business interests in the South African city. The respected businessman relocated to South Africa in search of asylum after members of an al-Shabaab cell, composed of his former recruits, were tracked down and killed by ATPU officers in January 2016.[78]

[76] Fred Oluoch "EA security chiefs meet over common approach to terror attacks, piracy" The East African, 21 September 2019 https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/How-westgate-attack-jolted-region-police-chiefs-into-action/4552908-5281736-4wqx5xz/index.html.

[77] Cyrus Ombati "Lead investigator in dusitD2 Hotel terror attack collapses, dies at JKIA" The Standard, 1 December 2019 https://www.sde.co.ke/local-news/2001351658/lead-investigator-in-dusitd2-hotel-terror-attack-collapses-dies-at-jkia.

[78] Kamore Maina and Daniel Wesangula "Revealed: Sh2.3b funds link to Dusit attack" The Standard, 25 August 2019 https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001339358/revealed-sh2-3b-funds-link-to-dusit-attack.

Explaining the Spread of Extremist Narratives in Southern Africa

Most critical in analysing this phenomenon of extremism in Southern Africa is the historic origins and gradual spread of extremist ideology, often completely innocent on face value, but as witnessed in other regions on the continent it represents the hallmark of a slow-growing cancer. Among the most vulnerable are children who socialised into an extremist mindset at an impressionable age posing not only a threat to believers of both their faith and other religious groups. Consequently, the first manifestation of this extremist ideology will most probably be directed at members of the same faith.

In Southern Africa, the manifestation of extremist ideology spread from the northeast further south, not implying that South Africa only recently witnessed the gradual growth of extremism. For example, alarm bells were sounded in Malawi during May 2016, when Bishop Stima Monfort stressed that while traditional Islam in Malawi has been moderate and that Christians and Muslims have been coexisting peacefully, foreign influences threatened religious tolerance and social cohesion. The Bishop was particularly referring to imams from Sudan who proclaim a more radical form of Islam and these imams cannot be controlled by established Muslim leaders. Consequently, attacks on Christians and moderate Muslims over the last few years increased in Mangochi district of southern Malawi. The concern expressed by the bishop is that "anyone who has the necessary funds can build a mosque. In addition, the person who built the mosque is also the one who controls the imam. Some villages have four mosques: a historic one, as well as other, newly built ones". In addition to the short- to medium term threat, men have been encouraged to have more than one wife, more children, but without the resources to send children to school. Consequently, a growing number of young people are receiving scholarships to study in Sudan or Saudi Arabia, returning home radicalised.[79]

Studying every case study on the development of violent extremism on the continent, the name of the country may be different, but the same processes took place: The introduction of Salafism, often through

[79] Zenit "Foreign, Fundamentalist Muslims Threatening Coexistence in Malawi Diocese" 27 May 2016 https://zenit.org/2016/05/27/foreign-fundamentalist-muslims-threatening-coexistence-in-malawi-diocese/.

Wahhabi teachings (scholars settling in traditional communities) leading to growing religious intolerance (between traditional and radical Muslims and between radical Muslims and other religions, particularly Christianity) fostering even greater polarisation as children are introduced to radical teachings (some leaving for further studies), producing a new generation of citizens that the younger generation can identify with. For example, Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo from Kwale County, Kenya who, when in his 20s in 1972, received an eight-year scholarship to study at the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. Years later, Abou Rogo Mohammed became his student and the rest is history. Rogo did not have to go to Saudi Arabia to be introduced to Wahhabi-Salafi teachings, instead he learned from another Kenyan he could identify with.[80] Even after Rogo's death, his teachings are being distributed across Eastern and Southern Africa, with particular reference to Tanzania and Mozambique through followers that had direct contact with him, but also reaching others through his CDs and other propaganda materials that were posted online and on social media, especially accessible to Swahili speaking individuals.[81]

It is equally worth noting that Islamist extremism also adapts to domestic circumstances. As explained in the first part of this analysis, through using remoteness, inability to provide basic services—in this case education—but also health care, other social services, etc. in areas where the government is unable to reach. This was equally the case for foreign nationals using South Africa as a safe haven, launching attacks from or facilitating attacks in other countries. The other reality is that violent extremist ideology—traditionally regarded as foreign—increasingly reaches local communities and citizens that will not necessarily raise suspicion, thus leading to a growing concern around the presence of local sleeper cells. Being radicalised, even without the involvement and direct contact with a facilitator implies the existence of multifaceted threats that can be truly decentralised.

[80] Hassan Juma Ndzovu "The story of the preacher who laid the ground for violent jihadi ideology in Kenya" Quartz Africa, 20 November 2018 https://qz.com/africa/1469610/the-preacher-who-laid-the-ground-for-violent-jihadi-ideology-in-kenya/.

[81] People Pill "Aboud Rogo: Kenyan Islamic Cleric" https://peoplepill.com/people/aboud-rogo/.

Conclusion

Southern Africa has relatively been spared from the same levels of violence experienced in Western Africa with Boko Haram and the Horn of Africa with the growing reach of al-Shabaab beyond Somalia. Whether this distance from major hotspots of violent extremism and terrorism is going to remain is in serious doubt. Only considering the arrests and plots mentioned in this chapter—without referring to all—should be a serious wake-up call for politicians, per implication policy makers, practitioners (members of the intelligence community and security forces), but also the broader public.

While the label as being a "safe-haven" is still relevant, the ability of especially IS to radicalise and recruit South Africans to not only leave the country to participate in other conflicts (this is not the first manifestation as South Africans also left to fight the Soviet Union as part of the Afghan Mujahideen), but even further encourage members to stay and execute attacks on own soil. No longer relying on foreigners that may raise alarm but using locals that blend in should warrant a new commitment to increase intelligence and investigation capabilities. Although the current potential target selection may be "obvious", namely US, British and Israeli interests, a growing concern is—as witnessed in the Shi'a mosque attack in Verulam—that plots may also in the future include attacks against other religious institutions (recognising that Jewish institutions through its association with Israel are already on that list) and international events.

Safety to operate without being detected through the gradual spread from the north to the south as is the case in Mozambique (although a number of role-players and additional factors not discussed in this chapter play a role), Malawi, and South Africa. The ability of non-South African nationals to get South African identity documents and passports, as well as the role corruption is playing in Malawi with foreigners securing access to official documents are also contributing to the problem. In contrast to the falsification of these documents in countries throughout the world, criminals and potential terrorists have access to blank official passports or even manage to get passports issued under fraudulent names. Secondly, as witnessed in the Mohammed Gulzar case, marriage to a local can equally divert attention. Pockets of support particularly amongst immigrant communities (legal or illegal) further contribute to an already grave situation.

Finally, considering to challenges of terrorism in Southern Africa and the lessons from the resort to a hard-handed approach of defence and security services, the question is still whether the region is capable of effectively preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism. This is considered important in view of the severe human-rights abuses as experienced in Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia including South Africa. The short answer is "no". At least not until countries in the region invest in their intelligence capabilities to have a better understanding of what is happening underneath the surface while also realising that extremists will use any vulnerability to its advantage. Not unless the State is wholly "observing" a clearer picture will not emerge.

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CHAPTER 20

Terrorism in Mozambique: Evolution, Context, and Prognosis

Hassan Abdullahi Guhad

Introduction

Islamic terrorism has been posing a major threat to Southern and Eastern African countries since 1990 that necessitated these countries adopt measures to contain this threat.[1] Mozambique failed to adopt any such measures to diffuse the threat of terrorism giving an opportunity for radicalization to spread specially to its northern province (Cabo Delgado) which is bordering Tanzania.[2] The threat came to reality when the terrorist group started violent attacks from October 2017 which seemingly the government of Mozambique is unable to contain until today.[3]

[1] Bussotti, L., & Torres, C. (2020). The Risk Management of Islamic Terrorism in a Fragile State: The Case of Mozambique. *Problems of Management in the 21st Century*, *15*(1), 9.

[2] Ibid.

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H. A. Guhad (✉)
Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya
e-mail: hassandhidho@gmail.com

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The terrorist attacks in Cabo Delgado has also exposed the regional body, Southern African Development Community's (SADC) inability to protect and support its member states during security challenges.[4]

Since 2015, Mozambique has emerged as a theater of terrorist ecosystem albeit nonviolent until October, 2017.[5] In Islamic extremist context within the African continent, Ansar Al-Sunna in Mozambique is not unique but just poses acute threat like Boko Haram, Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wa al- Muslimin' (JNIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) in the Sahel, and al-Shabaab in Somalia.[6] Multiplicities of push and pull factors have been attributed to the rise of this extremist group in Mozambique. For instance, citizen-state mistrust, land disputes and lack of satisfaction in land resettlement programs were identified as push factors while weak states and porous borders were established as pull factors.[7]

This chapter discusses the rise of this militant extremist group that deploys violence in pursuit of their goals in Mozambique. It provides an overview of Islamic State's (IS) historical mutation focusing on Mozambique's affiliate group. The chapter unpacks the choice of "Cabo Delgado in Mozambique" as the epicenter of the terror group's center of gravity. It subsequently discusses the conditions conducive to terrorism in that province. The chapter further puts forward some preceding tell-tale red-flags prior to the violent militant attacks that could have been utilized by the Mozambique security apparatus to avert the attacks. It finally discusses the government and the regional responses to these attacks and proffers alternative recommendations as the conclusion.

[4] Mlambo, V. H., & Masuku, M. M. (2021). Terror at the front gate: Insurgency in Mozambique and its implications for the SADC and South Africa. *Journal of Public Affairs*, e2700.

[5] Bukarti, A. B., & Munasinghe, S. (2020). The Mozambique conflict and deteriorating security situation. *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change*, *19*.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Afriyie, F. A., & Arkorful, V. E. (2021). Terror at the Doorstep: The Rising Threat of Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah (ASWJ) Jihadist Insurgency in Mozambique. *Financial Times*, *5336*, 689.

The Rise of Extremist Islamic Groups in Mozambique

The Islamic State morphed from Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2006 while its brutal strategies and ideologies were rejected and dissociated by the Al-Qaeda core.[8] The terror group's different branding includes IS, Daesh, Islamic State In Levant (ISIL) and Islamic State referring to its different geographical ambitions.[9] The continued bombardment and ground operational offensives by counterterrorism coalition forces with the support of other local allied forces against Islamic State in Libya, Syria, and Iraq, notwithstanding, the terror group has manifested organizational depth, resilience and creativity in carrying out spectacular terrorist attacks globally.[10] The failed state institutions and ungoverned spaces in Libya, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere in the world will remain favorable spaces for IS and Al-Qaeda to animate while conflict zones will remain a nourishment for their jihadism resolve.

The Islamic State has established affiliates in Africa in a regionalization manner, like the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP), Islamic State in Central Africa (ISCAP) and Islamic State in Somalia. The 2019 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) shows 3 African countries (Nigeria, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo) in the top ten of the most terrorist attacked countries.[11] Mozambique on its part was ranked position 25 by the same report.[12] The GTI ranks countries in descending orders according to the impact of terrorism where position 1 (one) represents the most impacted country hence Mozambique is considered as a highly impacted country by terrorism. It is also worth noting, how Mozambique rose from position 95 (low impacted country by terrorism) in 2012[13]

[8] Sekulow, J. (2015). *Rise of ISIS: A threat we can't ignore*. Simon and Schuster.

[9] Shamieh, L., & Szenes, Z. (2015). The Rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). *Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science*, *14*(4), 363.

[10] Gerges, F. A. (2017). *ISIS: a history*. Princeton University Press.

[11] Global Terrorism Database. Retrieved on 26th April 26, 2021 from https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_GTD_GlobalTerrorismOverview2019_July2020.pdf.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Global Terrorism Index 2012, Relief Web, December 2012: Capturing The Impact of Terrorism From 2002–2011, retrieved from, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2012-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf.

to position 15 (high impacted country) in 2020.[14] Various countries in Southern and Eastern Africa have been threatened with terrorists acts by armed Islamic groups since the 1990s.[15] Although many of these countries in the regions have devised and adopted policies and legislations to counter Islamic militancy, Mozambique has not prioritized such measures until the outbreak of extremist violence in the country. The diffusion and manifestations of terrorism in Mozambique is the logical consequence of radicalization of the youth particularly in the Northern province of Cabo Delgado.[16]

The foregoing mutation and animation of terrorism thrives in vulnerable spaces where state institutions abdicate their responsibilities or are incapable in dealing with and containing the threat. While other neighboring countries were concerned and collaborating with other like-minded strategic partners in the global war on terror and its consequences thereof in their home countries, Mozambique was initially preoccupied with mitigating threats from Somali piracy and domestic political activities of RENAMO. This gap, created by the Government of Mozambique, is believed to have provided the terrorist group with time and favorable space to recruit, radicalize, train, plan and carry out violent terrorist attacks in Cabo Delgado since October 2017.[17]

Insurgency begins well in advance before resorting to violent attacks and the use of force with the availability of favorable spaces and time.[18] This logic resonates with Ngunyi and Katumanga distance-decay concept that posits, in the absence or abstinence of state actors, organized militia groups find favorable space to organize and play state roles challenging the Weberian monopoly of violence hence the oligopoly of violence.[19]

[14] Global Terrorism Index 2020, Relief Web, June 2021: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism. Retrieved from, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2020-measuring-impact-terrorism.

[15] Bussotti, L., & Torres, C. (2020). The Risk Management of Islamic Terrorism in A Fragile State: The Case of.
Mozambique. *Problems of Management in the 21st Century*, *15*(1), 9.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Galula, D. (2006). *Counterinsurgency warfare: theory and practice*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

[19] Katumanga, M., & Ngunyi, M. (2014). From Monopoly to Oligopoly of Violence.

So far, not much is known about the Islamic militants that execute terrorist acts in Cabo Delgado. While they have been called names like Al-Sunnah WaJamaa and as Al-Shabaab by the locals, it is not yet clearly known who they are, as well as their domestic and international supporters and the intended strategic ends they want to achieve at the beginning of the third decade of the twenty-first Century.[20] This group's choice of Cabo Delgado is elaborated in the following section to interrogate "*why Cabo Delgado as the Centre of gravity*?".

Cabo Delgado: The Centre of Gravity

The discovery of natural gas and its liquefaction thereof, (LNG), with an investment of an estimated 50 billion US dollars has been predicted to may have a mirage realization due to the global increased production of gas by both Saudi Arabia and Russia, as well as the increased insurgency in Cabo Delgado where this gas exploration was earmarked to take place.[21] The growing threat of this militant group has attracted attention from academia and media alike where many assessed it as an extension of the Islamic State in the Central African Province efforts to incorporate its ranks and files.

In October 2019, a report of the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) described the country as a "forgotten province" fertile for breeding extremists. The radicalization of youths in Mozambique is traceable to among other things, the high unemployment and illiteracy rate terming it as a forgotten province.[22] The report notes that youth grievances centered on the growing oil and gas exploration and extraction in the province and the lack of consideration for the local employment of the youth in the province whereas many employed in the project come from other provinces especially from the capital, Maputo. It is also plausible from this ISS report that due to the proximity of the Tanzanian border; the province has experienced Tanzanian Al-Shabaab linked operatives crossing over and infiltrating to radicalize the youth.

[20] Dos Santos, F. A. (2020). War in resource-rich northern Mozambique–Six scenarios. *CMI Insight*.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Matsinhe, D. M., & Valoi, E. (2019). The genesis of insurgency in northern Mozambique. *ISS Southern Africa Report*, *2019*(27), 1–24.

Terrorism doesn't start overnight and there must have been a prior incubation period where the militants recruited, radicalized, trained and planned to perpetuate terror attacks against their chosen targets. This logic can hold in the Cabo Delgado province where violent extremist attacks of alarming dimensions have repeatedly been experienced since 2017. For instance, some analysts argue that this sect dates back to a decade earlier but adopted a jihadist tactics in mid 2010s before the first attack it carried out in October 2017 where it captured and held Mocimboa da Praia town in the Cabo Delgado province for 48 hours and looted weaponry before fleeing to the bush.[23] By 2019, the extremists in Mozambique declared allegiance to the Islamic State to project its global propaganda of the deeds. Subsequently, the IS in Mozambique affiliate not only expanded its geographical sphere to the Cabo Delgado province but also grew in strength, lethality, frequency and sophistication in its terrorism maneuver.

The concern over the growing threat of the IS affiliate was subject of discussion prior to the violent attacks of 2017 in Cabo Delgado by Mozambique state authorities and Islamic Council of Mozambique in particular. For instance, in a national conference organized and led by Mozambique Muslim leadership between 10 and 13 November 2016 in Nampula, the following characteristics were manifest in their presentation on what the leaders termed as the Al-Shabaab in Cabo Delgado:

> They discourage formal education in public institutions (school, university, etc.); They do not respect Islamic principles;
> They allow weddings without consent from the girl's parents; They carry knives, which symbolize jihad;
> They do not accept dialogue;
> They incite violence and dissatisfaction against the teachers of ISLAM; They promise attacks against the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jammat.[24]

The threats associated with the incubation of the militants in Mozambique is traceable to around 2010 before it spread to districts in Cabo

[23] Morier-Genoud, E. (2020). The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *14*(3), 396–412.

[24] Ibid.

Delgado and turned violent in 2017. By 2019, the presence of terrorists in the country has already taken strong roots. Checklist of some notable incidents of terrorism in Mozambique are shown below:

a. Terrorists attacked a convoy associated with the Anadarko Petroleum Corporation between Mocimboa da Praia and the Afungi Peninsula on Thursday 21 February 2019 leading to the death of one contractor.[25]
b. ISIS's affiliate in Mozambique claimed responsibility for the killing of seven people, including a police officer and two children, in Lidjungo village, Nangade District on Wednesday 3rd July 2019.
c. In two separate attacks in Muidumbe and Macomia Districts, IS's affiliate in Mozambique, killed 7 police officers and one civilian on Tuesday 10th September 2019. The terrorists also kidnapped 4 women, burned 70 houses, vandalized a primary school, and set fire to a hospital.[26]
d. On Saturday 13th October 2019, the ISIS's affiliate in Mozambique reportedly clashed with Mozambican and Russian security forces, resulting in the deaths of 10 soldiers.[27]
e. The Islamic State in Central Africa Province issued a media statement that it killed 55 Mozambican and "Christian" forces during an attack it launched on Palma on Wednesday, 24th March 2021 in which it claimed cutting off the access of workers being evacuated in 17 trucks to the sea. About 10 of the trucks were destroyed and several evacuees were killed.[28]

Morier-Genoud associates the rise of this sect with the poverty in Cabo Delgado province, and historical differentiations constructed between the Muslim and the Christian communities in the province that fragmented overtime.[29][29] Although the majority of the community living in the province is of Islamic faith, the social, economic, and political positions

[25] Intelyse April 21st, 2021.

[26] Mozambique, US State Department Country Report, 2019.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Islamic State Attack in Mozambique Demonstrates Growing Terror Threat, Soufan Centre, March 31st, 2021.

[29] Ibid.

and power is in the hands of the Christian faithful.[30] The foregoing accentuates how a province termed as the poorest but that sits on precious untapped resources like oil and gas amounting to a multi-billion US dollars potentiality has responded with a violent extremist terrorist group before the exploration by Total has materialized and turning the theater to a curse than a blessing. This might be as a result of an exclusive approach and lack of proper awareness and involvement of the host community by the state. The foregoing is an indication of how an aggrieved community that sits on untapped resources that it cannot explore but excluded once extraction is operationalized is a timed bomb, a curse rather than a blessing.

Conditions Conducive for Terrorism in Mozambique

A negative binomial regression analysis conducted by Freytag, A., Krüger, J. J., Meierrieks, D. & Schneider on 110 countries from 1971 to 2007 found that, indeed poor socio-economic progress is a condition conducive for terrorism.[31] The argument is that, the level of terrorism activities is affected by the opportunity cost which is based in turn on the socio-economic conditions. This notion underpins the strategic model in terrorism studies that describes terrorists as political utility maximizers.[32]

Marongwe argues in a research conducted in the southern Africa region where Mozambique was among the focus countries that democratization challenges, porous borders, prolonged conflicts and poverty as conditions that animate international terrorism in Southern Africa.[33] The long- standing contestation between RENAMO and the ruling party, FRELIMO, might have created dissents among the population in Cabo Delgado with marginalization as a justification animating terrorism as the final voice avenue. This is made worse by the ungoverned status

[30] Ibid.

[31] Freytag, A., Krüger, J. J., Meierrieks, D., & Schneider, F. (2011). The origins of terrorism: Cross-country estimates of socio-economic determinants of terrorism. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *27*, S5-S16.

[32] Abrahms, M. (2008). What terrorists really want: Terrorist motives and counterterrorism strategy. *International Security*, *32*(4), 78–105.

[33] Marongwe, N. (2015). International terrorism potential in Southern Africa. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *38*(9), 776–793.

which fattens the full cycle toward terrorism through the listed sources and forms of vulnerability, cognitive extremism and ultimate violent extremism owing to poor governance and the laid-back position of the Mozambique government.

Many post-independent African countries continue to struggle with internal conflicts, endemic corruption, porous borders and a wide range of governance etiquettes. I argue that these are the same nourishment for opportunistic terrorist and extremist groups giving them favorable space and mileage to their relative advantage. Mozambique is not an exception in this regard. For instance, in the 2020 global corruption index by Transparency International, Mozambique scored 25% and was ranked position 149 out of 180 countries where position 1 means least corrupt.[34] The Cabo Delgado population that seem to have been excluded in the resource exploration and its benefits thereof, has used such grievance as well as other underlying push and pull factors as a justification to resort to violent action against the state and those they perceive or see as the state accomplices while using ISIS identity as their ticket to achieve their objective and reach out to their intended audiences.

Warning Signs to Palma Terrorist Attack: Negligence or Ignorance

As early as February 2021, some analysts raised the red flag over the growing decentralization of Islamic state similar to the path taken by Al-Qaeda when it started focusing away from its core and to its regional affiliates.[35] Three main IS affiliates in Africa have been of a major concern to analysts and these include Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP), and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). Terrorist organizations are opportunistic, and ISIS is not an exception. Weak states with overlapping internal conflicts and governance deficits offer such opportunities that terrorist organizations utilize to their advantage and in this case, Mozambique seems to have created such a lacuna.

[34] Transparency International (2020). Corruption Perceptions Index (2020). Retrieved on 21st April 2021 from https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/moz#

[35] February, *2021: The Soufan Center.*

The growing threat of extremist organizations in Mozambique notwithstanding, the state authorities failed, neglected, were ignorant to act or assumed the preceding tell-tale consolidation of terrorism threat in the country. An obvious warning shot to this effect was the March 11th, 2021 US State Department naming of the Islamic State affiliates in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique and their respective emirs Seka Musa Baluku and Abu Yassir Hassan as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT).[36] More importantly, Mozambique security apparatus could have given the seriousness it deserves to the celebratory mood of the terror group as a result of this designation where their relevant media platforms acknowledged their growing threat in the region to the extent of being designated. This fueled their propaganda of the deed narrative as a threat to peace and security.

The Islamic State in Mozambique was designated by the State Department on March 11th 2021 as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and its leader Abu Yassir Hassan as Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under the US Immigration and Nationality Act. This ISIS affiliate group has killed more than 2,500 people and displaced approximately 700,000 civilians while further beheading hundreds of them since 2017.[37] This terrorist organization with the estimated strength of 800 members has accumulated strength and activities over time and space under the watch of the state authorities to the extent of carrying out a spectacular attack like the Palma one.[38] There had been several attacks perpetrated by this group within the environs of Palma for over a year before the 24th March 2021 violent attack that caused deaths, disruptions and destructions. Based on the foregoing, there must have been a serious intelligence failure, or lack of its utilization thereof, if any, to avert such a deadly spectacular attack. The proximity with Tanzania that experienced radicalized youth having links with Al-Shabaab in Somalia and that carried out attacks in Kibiti prompting military action that displaced the insurgency pushing them across into Mozambique might have been a main precursor that strengthened the local Mozambique insurgent outfit.

[36] Site Intelligence Group. March 12, 2021: Jihadists Congratulate ISCAP for "Honor" of U.S. Terror Listing, Foretell Future Airstrikes.

[37] *The Soufan Center (*March 24, 2021*):* Islamic State Attack in Mozambique Demonstrates Growing Terror Threat.

[38] NewYorkTimes,March15th,2021retrievedfrom https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/15/world/africa/mozambique-american-troops-isis-insurgency.html.

The incubation, accumulation, animation and mutation thereof, of the terror group has taken an ample time to organize, plan, and attack without serious state counterterrorism actors' denial, disruption or defeat whatsoever. For instance, between May 1st and November 30th 2019, the militants carried out multiple attacks that included eighty targeted assaults, twenty-nine armed clashes, ten targeted killings, seven asset attacks and four shelling.[39] All the foregoing aggregated incidents were clear indicators or preceding warnings of worse things to come that could have been averted proactively if state security apparatus utilized to its advantage, instead of the wait and see kind of scenario witnessed in the Palma attack.

Government Response: Reactive and Over-Reaction

Since the September 11th 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York, counterterrorism policies and legislations have been morphing and they continue to do so. Different countries devised and adopted their own counterterrorism approaches based on lessons learnt and best practices. Many organizations intervened to spearhead programs geared toward terrorism mitigation. Scholars, researchers, analysts, and practitioners continue to interrogate what works and what doesn't in matters of counterterrorism. The hard approaches and offensives against terrorism after 9/11 could not sustain a long-term win against terrorism but became a basis to revised counterterrorism strategies that combined hard and soft approaches including more proactive policies for countering violent extremism.

In 2008, the United Nations adopted a Global Counterterrorism Strategy anchored on a UN resolution that led to the formulation of four broad counterterrorism strategies;

a. Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism,
b. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism,

[39] Intelyse. Retrieved on April 21, 2021 from https://intelyse.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2019/12/INT-IS-MOZ-Southern-African-Jihad-The-Cabo-Delgado-Insurgency-1of3.pdf.

c. Measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in this regard and
d. Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.[40]

Despite divergent policies and the investment of huge financial and material resources directed at counterterrorism by the United Nations and its member states and other strategic partners, the scourge of terrorism has persisted in the last two decades and continues to escalate with the emergence of new terrorist organizations and affiliates. Addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism spread and putting measures in place to prevent and combat the same may have averted the deadly attacks in Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique. However, counterterrorism operations require more balanced, planned, and carefully thought approaches tailored to specific geographical threat and demography to avoid a negative blow back and counterproductive blanket condemnation.

In its bid to contain the growing threat of ISIS affiliates in Mozambique, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) partnered with the governments of Germany and Mozambique in a threefold coordinated response; 1. To strengthen the Mozambique's capacity 2. To prevent further escalation of violence and 3. To strengthen the national criminal justice response to overcome the threat.[41]

Mozambique responded through the deployment of its National Defense Forces to contain the escalation of violence in Cabo Delgado province against civilians, public infrastructure and government installations.[42] Since toward the end of 2017 Mozambique security forces had clashed with the militants and were accused of human rights violations according to Human Rights Watch (HRW). For instance, between October 5th and December 20th, 2017, not less than 200 people were

[40] UN Resolution A/RES/60/288 (8 September 2006).

[41] UNODC (November 9th, 2020). UNODC & Germany Join Forces to Support Mozambique in Fight Against Growing Terrorist Threat. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2020/November/unodc-and-germany- join-forces-to-support-mozambique-in-fight-against-growing-terrorist-threat.html.

[42] Vhumbunu, C. H. (2021). Insurgency in Mozambique: the role of the Southern African development community. *Conflict Trends*, *2021*(1), 3–12.

arrested and detained in Mocimboa da Praia.[43] In another incident, the government forces bombarded Mitumbate village suspected to be the base of the extremist group and this operation resulted in the death of 50 people including vulnerable women and children.[44]

The foregoing underscores the lack of proper compliance to contemporary counterterrorism operations where hard approaches and overreaction have come of age, but unprepared state actors overreact with a blanket condemnation, hence aggravating the situation. Such excessive reactive response of shelling a village with a suspected handful of militants, notwithstanding the offensive is an overreaction and *"killing a mosquito with a missile"*. In counterterrorism as well as in counterinsurgency, population is the center of gravity and who wins the hearts and minds of the population stands to eventually win the war. The overreaction of Mozambique security forces against the population falls short of David Galula's key counterinsurgency prescriptions regarding the importance of the population in massing intelligence to locate the enemy.[45] Winning the hearts and the minds of the population is a key counterterrorism milestone that can be utilized to isolate and defeat the enemy while deriving real time intelligence from the local population to locate and kill or capture high profile targets in their ranks.

For state agencies to effectively counter terrorism, they must gain the insights of the adversary pursued, including their tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP). This will enable CT actors to identify and dismantle the cells that establish the basis for interconnected terrorism networks. This can be through intelligence, police and military collaboration by using the laws of the land and within the context of their criminal justice system.[46] Counterterrorism operations which are based on intelligence that identifies and locates the real perpetrators minimizes costs in cash and casualties as well as a blanket condemnation. This will enable CT instruments to focus on intelligence-led policing and operations that will

[43] Matsinhe, D. M., & Valoi, E. (2019). The genesis of insurgency in northern Mozambique. *ISS Southern Africa Report*, *2019*(27), 1–24.

[44] Matsinhe, D. M., & Valoi, E. (2019). The genesis of insurgency in northern Mozambique. *ISS Southern Africa Report*, *2019*(27), 1–24.

[45] Galula, D. (2006). *Counterinsurgency warfare: Theory and Practice*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

[46] Aznar, J. M. (2006). *Counterterrorism strategies: Successes and failures of six nations*. Potomac Books, Inc.

exonerate innocent populations from mass arrests and overreaction by state authorities. Closely related from an inclusive CT leadership approach to these CT practices, is the urgent need for identifying and boldly executing exit strategies of contextualized deradicalization and/or disengagement programs while simultaneously developing evidence-informed prevention and countering violent extremism strategies having a whole of society approach.

The importance of knowing the enemy has been affirmed by Sun Tzu in his "Art of War", where he contended that "If you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle". In fact, overreaction from state agencies against the population and blind blanket punishment without knowing the real enemy had been an advantage to the terrorists who offer an alternative redress to their grievances hence the ripple effect of recruiting such into their ranks. For instance, a research by Anneli Botha on Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) and Al-Shabaab found that, many Muslim youth that joined extremist militant groups did so as a counter reaction to state agencies collective condemnation.[47] Such overreactions and collective punishment by counterterrorism actors animate conditions conducive for terrorism.

Regional Response: The Role of Southern African Development Community (SADC)

As part of the regional response to counterterrorism, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to which Mozambique is a member state deployed a joint security intervention assessment taskforce to assess the ISIS threat in the country.[48] This assessment mission was conducted between 15th and 21st of April 2021 and the taskforce spent a day in Cabo Delgado which is the most affected province. The taskforce recommended a joint operation comprising of 2,916 soldiers to restore law

[47] Botha, A. (2014). Radicalization in Kenya. Recruitment to Al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council. *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, *2014*(265), 28–28.

[48] Fabricius P. (Daily Maverick April 27, 2021). SADC military officials to propose a 3000-strong rapid response forceto take on Mozambique jihadists. Retrieved on April 27,2021 from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-04-27-sadc-military-officials-to-propose-a-3000-strong-rapid-response-force-to-take-on-mozambique-jihadists/.

and order in Mozambique.[49] The composition of the military intervention recommended composition of light military infantry, intelligence and surveillance, air support, logistical support, special forces and surface patrol ships. The report that was discussed in a conference held on April 28, 2021 by Security organ of SADC ministers accepted the proposal but was to further present the same to the summit of heads of state of the security organ.[50] However, Willem of Institute of Security Studies is skeptical of this approach and argues that strong military intervention to counter-insurgency in Africa has never worked and this may not be different.[51]

The complexity of the situation in Mozambique is acknowledged by Willem Els of Institute of Security Studies in an interview with CRA channel where he argues that; the perpetrators include multiple nationals from SADC and Eastern African Community (EAC) member states like Somalia, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, among others.[52] Willem further argues, since the Mozambique ISIS affiliate declared allegiance, they became more trained, more equipped, more professional and with more sophisticated strategies in how they carry out their attacks. He argues this will have implications on regional security and economic challenge despite its initial inception as a local insurgency.[53]

Conclusion

The emergence of affiliates of the Islamic State in Africa and accompanying regionalization and consolidation of countries as provinces thereof, poses an existential security threat not only to the continent but also to

[49] Fabricius P. (Daily Maverick April 27, 2021). SADC military officials to propose a 3000-strong rapid response forceto take on Mozambique jihadists. Retrieved on April 27,2021from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-04-27-sadc-military-officials-to-propose-a-3000-strong-rapid-response-force-to-take-on-mozambique-jihadists/.

[50] Maverick (April 28th, 2021). SADC ministers agree to deploy a regional force in Mozambique. Retrieved on April 28, 2021 from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-04-28-sadc-ministers-agree-to-deploy-a-regional-force-in-mozambique/

[51] CRA YouTube Channel, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS_uGUv8SXo&authuser=1.

[52] Webber L. (July 9th, 2021). Developments in Mozambique's War Against the Islamic State. Retrieved on August 2, 2021 from https://lucaswebber.substack.com/p/developments-in-mozambiques-war-with.

[53] Ibid.

world peace and security at large. Many African countries have experienced post-independence internal conflicts leading to the rise of the dissent population creating favorable spaces for the rise and mutation of some Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) to terrorist outfits. The rise of Islamic State's affiliates in Mozambique has far reaching security ramification beyond Mozambique borders. Mozambique borders Tanzania with likely sleeper cells from Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo already experiencing ADF attacks. Mozambique is not far from Somalia and Kenya either and this proximity to already terrorist infested geographies sustain terrorist threats and vulnerabilities. The ISCAP that has already welcomed the Mozambique sect to IS ranks is comparatively distant as compared to East Africa terror affiliates in proximity that may pose a future regional security threat and may lead to a different consolidated province. Bearing in mind the on-going strategic regional and global efforts toward enhancing the exploitation of the blue economy, and further knowing of the threat posed to the Indian Ocean maritime domain by possible hardening of the Al-Shabaab of Somalia and the IS affiliates of Mozambique, there is then an urgent need for dynamic concerted efforts to counter and prevent the foreboding threat. The efforts by SADC to form, launch and operationalize the SADC Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre cannot go unmentioned; for this is one major step forwards core toward enhancing the CT posture of the region.

Whereas terrorism threat has been a major global security concern, its response has not been that promising per se. Its containment measures have attracted scholars and practitioners alike to recommend policies based on best practices through research and analysis. The Mozambique case begs for wider consultation and appropriate measures to respond. A proper interrogation of the situation and tailored approach will assist to avoid a knee-jerk intervention that may lead to endless and expensive protracted counterinsurgency campaigns.

By the time of writing this article several actors that include bilateral and multilateral actors have responded in deploying security forces while others pledged to support the counterinsurgency campaign in Mozambique. For instance, the Rwandan government deployed a joint Defense Forces and National Police comprising of 1000 armed personnel on July 9th 2021 to support Mozambique security forces fight against Islamic State affiliate in Cabo Delgado whereas the Council of European Union (EU) decided to establish an EU military training mission to support

against the crisis in the same theater.[54] Rwanda's deployment is based on a bilateral request from the Mozambican authority. Internally organized criminal groups are best contained by national police and the intelligence agencies for the purpose of investigation, prosecution and conviction within the criminal justice system. These internal security apparatuses are trained to deal with such internal security threats while the military is more of offensive and defensive combat force that may use excessive force and overreact to aggravate the situation. What remains to be seen is how multidimensional deployment of forces on bilateral and multilateral basis will operate in the same theater to confront a common threat in Mozambique as well as their coordination, command and control and their exit strategy thereof.

A well thought, calculated, contextualized, tailored, and coordinated intervention based on best practices and anchored within the confines of the rule of law and respect for human rights may be the best option to contain the terrorism threat in Mozambique. The choice of reactive approaches leading to overreaction can be counterproductive and have their own negative consequences. The bottom line of state interests is its own survival and its survival is more complex when it involves regional blocks with contending interests. Mozambique should be concerned of countries with differentiated interests in the intervention than a decisive defeat against the Islamic State leading to security entanglement hence prolonged and endless counterinsurgency campaign in Mozambique. Finally, deploying forces from immediate Mozambique bordering countries in its internal counterterrorism operations is not the best option, may create conflict of interests, protracted security entanglement and should be discouraged.

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[54] Webber L. (July 9th, 2021). Developments in Mozambique's War Against the Islamic State.

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PART V

West Africa and the Sahel

CHAPTER 21

Terrorist Threats and Vulnerabilities in West Africa and the Sahel

Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya

Introduction

In its classical usage, the Sahel refers to a geographical area that traverses 3,860 km from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea across the semi-arid region of Africa between the Sahara Desert to the north and the savannahs to the south. The Sahel belt stretches to a thousand kilometres in width, covering an area of just over three million square kilometres. Over the years, however, the usage of the term "Sahel"' has been widened to include political and economic variables. For instance, in 1973, the *Comité Inter Etat de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel* (CILSS) (Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) was formed by Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal to group countries that were then

U. M. Ogbonnaya (✉)
National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Nigeria
e-mail: maurice.ogbonnaya@gmail.com

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becoming interdependent.[1] CILSS members cover 5.7 million square kilometres of land, though Sahel-like terrain and climate are also found in non-CILSS member states, particularly Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and the northern part of Togo. In some contextualisations, the Sahel includes only 10 countries, namely, Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sudan, excluding Algeria and Nigeria. In another usage, the Sahel does not include Guinea and The Gambia.[2] In its present conceptualisation, the Sahel geographically extends from west to east in Africa, covering from Senegal, Mauritania, Central Mali, Burkina Faso, Southern Algeria, Niger, parts of Northern Nigeria, Central Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

Irrespective of conceptualisations, three interrelated characteristics define the Sahel region. First is the complexity of security challenges and humanitarian crises in the region, particularly the overlapping violent conflicts, environmental degradation, natural resource depletion, human and drug trafficking, and other transnational criminal activities. In recent years, the scope, spread, and intensity of violent conflicts in the Sahel have escalated to include militant Islamism, terrorism, and insurgency, which are directly and indirectly linked to illicit flow and trafficking of arms and drugs, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), ethno-political cleavages, secessionist agitations, and natural resource conflicts, especially recurrent conflicts between sedentary farmers and nomadic herders.[3] Overlapping conflicts have coalesced with fast growing population and youth bulge to produce abject poverty, recurrent food and nutrition crises, fragile economies, and instability, which undermine the

[1] Some of these areas are not located within the semi-arid zone but are prone to drought and susceptible to adverse climatic conditions.

[2] Ogujiuba, K. and Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2014), Climate Change, Food Insecurity and Political Crises in the Sahel: Examining the Nexus. In Kitissou, M. and Ginsberg, P.E. (eds.), *The Sahel: Focus of Hope, Focus of Fear*. London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers, pp. 107–130.

[3] Adetula, V., and Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2017). Conflicts in the Sahel: Regional Analysis and Linkages. Paper presented at the Policy Dialogue on Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Peacebuilding in the Maghreb, Sahel and Central Africa, organised by the African Peacebuilding Network of the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC-APN), New York; Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), Uppsala, Sweden; and African Institute of Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation (AIPECT), Rabat, Morocco, 28–29 September, 2017 at the IBIS Hotel, Avenue Haj Ahmed Cherkaoui, Agdal, Rabat, Morocco.

Table 21.1 Tabular representation of nature and types of conflicts in the Sahel region

	Nature and type of conflict	*Affected countries*
1	Terrorist insurgency	Chad, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somali
2	Transhumance/farmers conflict	Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria
3	Ethno-political conflicts and Instability	Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan/South Sudan, The Gambia
4	Revolutionary tendencies and Secessionist Agitations	Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria
5	Environmental/Natural Resource Conflicts	Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Niger, Nigeria
6	Food and Nutritional Crises	Regional
7	Fragile Economies	Regional

Source Author's Compilation from various sources

security of the region.[4] A representation of the nature and types of conflicts in the region is as shown in Table 21.1.

The second characteristic is the similarity in observable trends in socio-economic developments. Virtually all the countries are currently facing similar security challenges. In addition, conflict in one country of the region easily produces domino effects across the region. Recent instances include the spillover effects of the Libyan crisis across the Sahel, the spread of terrorism and insurgency in Mali through West Africa to the Lake Chad Basin, and the expanded activities of Islamist groups across the region. The third characteristic is that the region has problematic climatic conditions. The Sahelian climate is typically arid, which has severe implications for food and nutritional security. Since the 1960s, repeated and protracted drought in the Sahel region has reduced the region's normally meagre water supplies, shattered its agricultural economy, contributed to the starvation of the people, and forced the mass migration of people southward. Such southward movement has been attributed to the recurrent violent conflicts between sedentary farmers and nomadic herders and pastoralists

[4] Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2018). African Union, AFISMA and the Mali Crisis: Rethinking Security Intervention and Democratic Consolidation in Africa, *Calabar Journal of Politics and Administration (CJOPAA),* 4(1): 14–34, July.

as is evident in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.[5]

Structurally, the chapter is divided into three main sections. First is the Background and Context, which details the pattern of terrorist activities and networks in West Africa and the Sahel. The second section, Origin and Development of Terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel, discusses the history of terrorism, terrorist groups, and actors in the region, as well as the factors that predispose the region to terrorism. The third section examined the various military, diplomatic, and legislative responses to terrorism in the Sahel, as well as the challenges that these responses encounter. This is followed by a reasoned conclusion that one solution to terrorist expansionism in the Sahel may lie in the creation of open, equitable, inclusive, and pluralist societies, based on the full respect of human rights and with economic opportunities for all.

Background and Context

Terrorism, which is taken to mean premeditated and politically motivated acts of violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets and populations either by state or non-state actors, is not new to Africa. On 7 August 1998, two bombs exploded outside the US embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, killing 224 people and injuring 5,000 others. Responsibility was quickly traced to Al-Qaeda. Four years later, Al-Qaeda operatives struck again, killing 15 people in an Israeli-owned hotel near Mombasa, Kenya, and simultaneously firing missiles at an Israeli passenger jet taking off from Mombasa airport.[6] At that time, incidents of terrorism in Africa were rare. However, since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York by Al-Qaeda, incidences of terrorist attacks have been on the increase around the world. Africa, including West Africa and the Sahel, have not been an exception amidst significant cases of failed and successful attacks by terrorist networks.

[5] Ammour, L. A. (2012). Security Issues Emerging in the Maghreb and the Sahel after the Arab Spring, *Med. Security Panorama*, 128–131; George, P. (2012). The Libyan Crisis and the Western Sahel: Emerging Security Issues, *Backgrounder,* Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, 14 August.

[6] Lyman, P. N., and Morrison, J. S. (2004). The Terrorist Threat in Africa, *Foreign Affairs*, 83(1): 75–86, January–February.

Ten years after the WTC attack, of the 20 countries listed as being in the "Extreme Risk" category by the Terrorism Risk Index, four were in the Sahel (Algeria, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan). In 2013, of the 10 countries listed as being in the "Extreme Risk" category by the Terrorism Risk Index, three were in the Sahel (Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan). In 2014, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) reported that 82 per cent of people killed in terrorist attacks across the world were in five countries, one of which, Nigeria, is in the Sahel. The GTI also identified Ethiopia as being at risk of increased terrorism owing to extrajudicial killings, lack of women's political rights, lack of intergroup cohesion, and political instability.[7] In 2015, the Sahel was described as Africa's "new terrorist hot spot" and an "arc of instability."[8] It was projected that in the Maghreb and West African Sahel (consisting of Algeria, Chad, Cameroon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia), terrorist attacks increased progressively since September 2001, recording the highest number of attacks in 2014 (see Fig. 21.1).

By December 2015, it was estimated that the operations of Boko Haram resulted in the deaths of over 30,000 persons and the displacement of about 1.6 million people and 17,738 refugees in Nigeria, with hundreds of schoolgirls kidnapped in Nigeria's northeast region which occasioned monumental humanitarian crisis across the Lake Chad Basin region.[9] The numbers have been on the increase. As of 31 March 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that in the Lake Chad Basin, an estimated 9.8 million people required humanitarian assistance and that there are an estimated 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States of Nigeria. UNOCHA also indicated that there are 111,058 IDPs in Niger's Diffa Region, 297,380 IDPs in Cameroon's northern region, 169,003 IDPs in Chad's Lac Region, and 239,370

[7] Global Terrorism Index, Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism, New York: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2014, pp. 2 and 8.

[8] Alexander, Y. (2015). *Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel in 2014*. Sixth Annual Report for Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Inter-University Centre for Terrorism Studies and International Law Institute, February, p. iii.

[9] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2016). Nigeria: Boko Haram's Terror Ripples Through the Region. Available at http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria/; Ogbonnaya, M. (2020). Tramadol Smugglers' Transnational Network from Nigeria to Niger, ENACT Observer, June 9. Available at https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/tramadol-smugglers-transnational-network-from-nigeria-to-niger.

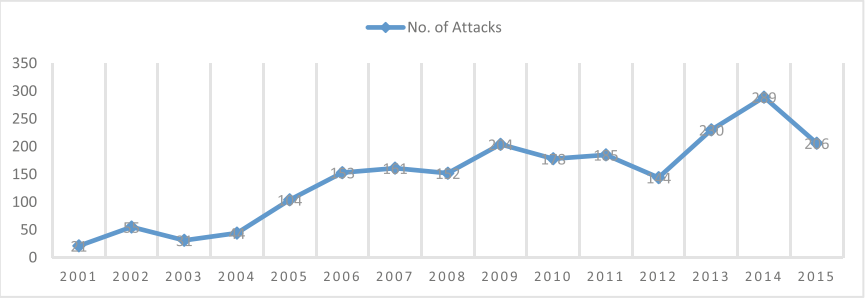

Fig. 21.1 Annual incidence of terrorist attacks in the Maghreb and Sahel Region: 2001–2015 (*Source* Authors' compilation with data from Yonah Alexander [2016: 8]).[10]

[10] Alexander, Y. (2016). *Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel in 2015*. Sixth Annual Report for Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Inter-University Centre for Terrorism Studies and International Law Institute, February, p. 8.

Nigerian refugees in Lake Chad Basin areas of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.[11]

Since 2011, the Sahel has become a haven for an assortment of terrorist groups and networks that operate across the region and beyond, with more than 27 affiliated "active militant Islamist groups and terrorist networks" operating in North Africa, the Maghreb and the West African Sahel. The region has faced an unprecedented wave of terrorism-related violence, with more than 4,000 deaths reported in 2019. While the broader Sahel region continues to be confronted with rising security challenges, terrorist organisations have expanded their operations in areas such as north and central Mali and Liptako-Gourma, the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. They have also sustained a southward movement to coastal countries in West Africa, resulting in increased attacks in Benin, Ghana and Togo. The impact of terrorism within the Sahel region has fostered an environment of massive displacement and perpetual violence. As of June 2020, approximately 920,000 people have been forced to flee Burkina Faso. Mali and Niger also continue to experience increasing numbers of internally displaced persons, including large numbers of women and children, and more than 7 million Nigerians currently require emergency assistance due to the operations of terrorist groups in the Northeast region of the country.[12]

The pattern of terrorist networks within the Sahel points to the possibility of the spread of the influence of international terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Islamic State to Africa with a coordinating base in the Sahel. The goal is to spread Islamic extremism and global jihadism with the flavour of the Salafist movements.[13] A careful examination of the logics and operations of the terrorist groups in the Sahel reveals patterns similar to Salafist movements. The terrorist groups' link with violence

[11] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 2020). Lake Chad Basin - Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, March 31.

[12] Border Security Report (2020). The SAHEL Region Border Challenges. Webinar held on Wednesday, September 30 at Ware Road Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 9EY, London.

[13] Tanchum, M. (2012). Al-Qa'ida's West African Advance: Nigeria's Boko Haram, Mali's Touareg, and the Spread of Salafi Jihadism, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs,* 6(2) (2012), 75–90; Ogbonnaya, U. M., Ogujiuba, K. and Stiegler, N. (2014), Terrorism in Nigeria: Implications of Boko Haram Movement for Security and Stability in the ECOWAS Sub-region, *African Security Review (ASR),* 23(2), 145–160, June.

and transnational criminality is a major source of insecurity and humanitarian crisis in the Sahel. For example, insurgent groups in north-eastern Nigeria and parts of the Lake Chad Basin regularly source for means of financing their activities from various forms of extortion such as payment of ransoms on kidnaped persons, imposition of illegal taxes on the people in seized territories for their protection and diverse types of levies for local trading activities. The extortions are carried out in addition to fundraising from illicit flows derived from trafficking of persons, drugs, and arms. In virtually all the cases of jihadist movement, terrorism, and insurgency in the Sahel, West Africa, and the Lake Chad Basin, there are concerns that illegally acquired finances by corrupt politicians and state officials are being used to initiate and sustain their activities. There are suspicions that some disgruntled political elites are supporting and funding terrorists and insurgents for political and religious reasons. There is also the factor of corruption and its role as a driver of terrorism and organised crime. In 2017, Nigeria's Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum in Paris pointed out that corruption has directly fuelled the terrorist insurgency in the country.[14]

Evolution of Terrorism in the Sahel

The origin, development, and expansion of terrorism in the Sahel can be located in two major historical epochs. The first is between 2006 and 2016. In 2011, terrorism in the Sahel began with an attempt by Al-Qaeda to spread to Africa. This spread was occasioned by the search for an operational and human resource base in Africa through cross-border recruitment. An independent assessment of the United States government's efforts against Al-Qaeda indicated that Al-Qaeda in its global outreach routinely exploited deteriorating security conditions, or vulnerabilities, in the security environments of weak and failing countries, as is the case in the Sahel, in order to manoeuvre and expand. Within the past decade, security vulnerabilities have emerged or become more

[14] Vanguard (2017). Corruption Responsible for Insurgency in the Northeast – Osinbajo, March 10. Available at http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/03/corruption-responsible-insurgency-northeast-osinbajo/.

widespread in the Sahel.[15] A major phase within this period is what has been described as the "Flexible Franchise" phase, during which Al-Qaeda established affiliate groups and secured alliances from Iraq to the Sahel.[16] For instance, in 2006, Al-Qaeda secured alliances with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Algeria, which was created in Algeria in 1998 by Hassan Hattab as the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC). GSPC was a splinter entity of the Armed Islamic Group, which was the largest and most extreme terrorist group in Algeria at the time. GSPC was renamed AQIM in January 2007 following the group's union with Al-Qaeda, which was announced by Al-Qaeda leader Aiman Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri on 11 September 2006.[17] In the same year, Al-Qaeda also secured alliances with Ansar al-Din (Defenders of the Faith) in Mali, which was founded in 2011 in Kidal by Iyad Ag Ghaly as a small Salafi-jihadi armed group.[18] In February 2012, it also secured alliances with Al-Shabab in Somalia. Although this alliance triggered debate within the leadership circles of Al-Shabaab over the value of a relationship with Al-Qaeda, the rationale for attacks on civilians, and the role of foreign fighters within the organisation, it definitively settled the core ideological identity and affiliation of Al-Shabaab within the strictures of its Salafi-Jihadi orientation.[19] In May 2015, Al-Qaeda also secured alliances with

[15] See McQuaid, J., et al. (2017). Independent Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts against Al-Qaeda, Center for Strategic Studies, October; See also International Crisis Group (ICG) (2016). Exploiting Disorder: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, Crisis Group Special Report, March 14.

[16] McQuaid, J., et al. (2017). Independent Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts against Al-Qaeda, Center for Strategic Studies, October, p. 37.

[17] Boeke, S. (2016). Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism, Insurgency, or Organized Crime? *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27(5): 914–936; United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (2020). The Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/the-organization-of-al-qaida-in-the-islamic (accessed 17 June 2021).

[18] Roetman, J. J., Migeon, M., and Dudouet, V. (2019). Salafi Jihadi Armed Groups and Conflict (De-)escalation: The case of Ansar Dine in Mali, Case Study Report. Berlin: Berghof Foundation.

[19] Bryden, M. (2014). The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity? Report of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Africa Program, Washington, Dc: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, February.

Boko Haram in Nigeria.[20] The goal at this point was to spread Islamic extremism and global jihadism and advance jihadist movements for the global Caliphate with the flavour of the Salafist movements.

The second phase in the development and expansion of terrorism in the Sahel began in 2017 with the emergence of Islamic State (ISIS). In June 2014, al-Baghdadi was elected as the chosen Caliph of the Islamic State and leader of the Muslim community—the Umma, by the Shura Council, to superintend over the organisation. The group expanded its areas of operations, influence, and authority across the Middle East and Europe to about a dozen other countries around the world, where it has affiliates. Lounnas captures the politics underpinning the rise and expansion of the group as follows:

> A few days later, al-Baghdadi requested all the radical jihadi organisations from around the world to dissolve their past allegiances, including al-Qaeda, and to join IS and come under his command. This directly affected the jihadi organisations active in North Africa, as most of them were until then linked directly to al-Qaeda. Organisations such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Algeria, Sahel) and Al-Mourabitoun (Sahel) had pledged allegiance to the leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, while others, such as Ansar al-Dine in the Sahel, were close to Al-Qaeda-linked organisations and shared the same ideology (i.e. Salafism and Jihadism) without being formally linked to Al-Qaeda themselves. The proclamation of the Caliphate resulted in deep divisions between those who chose to remain loyal to Al-Qaeda and those who decided to join the IS, provoking major rifts and splits within the organisations.[21]

This had two implications for Africa and the Sahel. First, it caused divisions among terrorist groups within the Sahel. Second, it led to a multiplication in the number of terrorist networks.

Since 2017, when the Islamic State suffered most of its devastating defeats during which it lost its declared capital Raqqa, Syria, the group

[20] See Markos, P. (2020). Assessing the Impact of Factional Infighting within Boko Haram" (2020). Honors Theses 1539, University of Mississippi, Spring; Zenn, J. (2020). Chronicling the Boko Haram Decade in Nigeria (2010–2020): Distinguishing Factions through Videographic Analysis, *Small Wars & Insurgencies,* 31(6): 1242–1294.

[21] Lounnas, D. (2018), Jihadist Groups in North Africa and the Sahel: Between Disintegration, Reconfiguration and Resilience, MENARA Working Papers No. 16, October, p. 1.

shifted its operational base to Africa. It has since established a strong presence in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and the Sahel. It has also established affiliations with and secured the allegiance of some domestic terrorist groups in Africa: Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), and Ansar Dine, among others. Using isolated suicide attacks, drive-by-shooting, hit-and-run operations, abduction and kidnapping for ransom, as well as decapitation as operational strategies, the group has increasingly pursued its expansionist ideology in Africa, which ultimately aims at spreading Islamic extremism and jihadist movements across the continent. The renaming of Boko Haram to ISWAP is a clear indication that the group has set its territorial influence beyond Nigeria to the West African sub-region. This may have resulted in the increased terrorist attacks across the sub-region that have targeted military formations among other state institutions and infrastructure. This is evident in several multiple and coordinated attacks in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and Burkina Faso since 2018.[22] It is also evident in targeted attacks against peacekeeping forces and multi-national joint task forces (MJTF) as seen in the September 2012 al-Qaeda attack on the international peacekeeper base in Sinai, Egypt; the January 2013 ambushing and killing of Mali-bound Nigerian soldiers in Kogi State by MUJAO and Ansaru; the January 2015 Boko Haram attack at the MJTF base in Baga town, Borno State, Nigeria; the April 2015 suicide attack on a UN base in Mali; and the January 2016 al-Shabaab attack on the African Union base in El-Ade town, Somalia, among others.[23]

Terrorist Groups and Actors in the Sahel

A mapping of active terrorist groups as of January 2020 reveals that the following prominent terrorist organisations, which are either affiliates of al-Qaeda or ISIS, operate in the Sahel. They include:

[22] Pujol-Mazzini, A. (2018). Islamist Terrorist Groups are Turning their Attention to West Africa. The Washington Post, July 3. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/07/03/islamist-terrorist-groups-are-turning-their-attention-to-westafrica/?utm_term=.c7e391cd4d1f.

[23] Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2020). Africa and the Future of the Islamic State after Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research*, 1(1), 103–119, April.

a. Boko Haram ("Western education is forbidden," officially Jamah al-Ahl al-Sunna lil-Dawa wal-Jihad, Group of the People of the Sunnah for the Dawa and the Jihad).
b. Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), and Ansaroul in Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria;
c. Haraka al-Tawhid wal-Jihad fil-Gharb al-Afriqiya (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, MUJAO),
d. Ansar Din (Defenders of the Faith); and
e. Jamah al-Nusrah al-Islam wal-Muslim (Group for the Support/Victory of Islam and the Muslims) in Libya, Burkina Faso and Mali; AQIM in Algeria, which operates across North Africa;
f. Al-Shaabab in Somali, Daesh (formerly referred to as Islamic State in the Iraq and Levant, ISIL), and
g. Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JINM), and
h. Haraka al-Muhajirin Mujahidin (Movement of the Emigrants and the Mujahidin), as well as non-aligned extremist groups.

Between Burkina Faso and Mali, AQIM controls five affiliate terrorist groups namely; Jamah Ansar al-Dine (Group of the Defenders of the Faith) and Katiba Khalid Ibn al-Walid (also known as Ansar al-Dine "South"); Al-Mowaqqioun bil-Dam (Those who Sign with their Blood) and its most famous katiba, Al-Moulathimoun (The Masked Man); Al-Mourabitoun (The Almoravids), and Al-Qaeda al-Gharb al-Afriqiya (Al-Qaeda in West Africa, AQW); Macina Liberation Front (MLF); and Sahara Emirate of AQIM. This is exclusive to other groups such as Haraka al-Tawhid wal-Jihad fil-Gharb al-Afriqiya (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, MOJWA); Ansaroul Islam and Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP).[24]

Terrorist groups in the region take advantage of existing fundamental vulnerabilities, namely—leadership deficit and governance failure, weak democratic institutions and absence of democratic culture, weak domestic security architecture and institutions, political exclusion and instability, outbreak of violent social conflicts, mass poverty and expansive inequality, porosity of national borders and underdevelopment of border communities, religious extremism and youth radicalisation, and proliferation of

[24] Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) (2020). Threat from African Militant Islamist Groups Expanding, Diversifying, January 18. Available at https://africacenter.org/spotlight/threat-from-african-militantislamist-groups-expanding-diversifying/.

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), among others, to engage in cross-border recruitment in search of operational and human resource base within the continent.

Driven by expansionist ideology and the belief in "a worldwide caliphate" which seeks to expand their areas of operations, influence, and authority across the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, their operational strategies include the use of high explosive bombs, drive-by shootings, suicide bombings, encirclement and suppression, targeted assassinations, sexual violence, and the targeting of children, who are often forced to join terrorist groups as a matter of survival. They also engage in illicit and criminal activities such as cattle rustling and rural banditry, drug trafficking, illegal gold mining, and kidnapping/abduction for ransom, among others.

Predisposing Factors to Terrorism in the Sahel

The Sahel region itself, especially northern and western Sahel, have some characteristics that make it increasingly vulnerable to terrorist groups' infiltration. Although these factors may differ from one country to another, they exhibit similar characteristics. These characteristics are influenced by the interplay of certain internal and external variables, which give them their regional character.

First, several years of protracted conflicts and weak state authority have left the region particularly underdeveloped. This has enabled transnational criminal networks to exercise control over pockets of territories. Years of protracted political upheavals have occasioned evident proliferation of small arms and light weapons in countries within the region. This has been compounded by globalisation, which has accentuated advancement in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and increased human movements across borderless societies. Currently, Nigeria features prominently in the three-spot continuum of transnational organised trafficking of SALWs within the West African Sahel: origin, transit route, and destination. Moreover, in the Sahel, terrorism, and violent extremism have been enhanced by easy accessibility to SALWs. Consequently, the proliferation of SALWs, including Semtex explosives, rocket-propelled grenades,

surface-to-air-missiles, and light anti-aircraft artillery has further aggravated the already unstable security situation as some of these weapons have fallen into the hands of criminal organisations and terrorist groups.[25]

The second factor is the region's relative proximity by sea to Latin America and lax maritime and airspace security. This makes the region, especially the West African coast and Gulf of Guinea, favoured transshipment points for Latin American drug cartels seeking to do business in the European markets. In this way, they create a vibrant and lucrative underground and illicit economy from which terrorist groups and other clandestine organisations of all forms benefit. Evidence includes the increasing sea piracy and related maritime crimes along the Horn of Africa, Somalia and the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Guinea, and the West African coast.[26] In recent times, the West African Sahel has featured prominently as a transit route in the reported seized shipment of cocaine by the United States' Drug Enforcement Administration.[27] Understandably, there exist several West African states with weak structures and institutions, which partly facilitates the illicit trade in drugs other psychotropic substances. As observed by Stephen Ellis, "not only is West Africa conveniently situated for trade between South America and Europe, but above all it has a political and social environment that is generally suitable for the drug trade. Smuggling is widely tolerated, law enforcement is fitful and inefficient, and politicians are easily bribed or even involved in the drug trade themselves."[28]

In addition to alarming levels of transnational crime, the Sahel region is home to an increasing number of young under- or unemployed men who have proved to be vulnerable targets for those who seek to turn their resentment and despair towards violence and crimes. According to the

[25] Aning, K., Okyere, F., and Abdallah, M. (2012). Addressing Emerging Security Threats in Post-Gaddafi Sahel and the ECOWAS Response to the Mali Crisis. *Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre Policy Brief*, No. 1, May.

[26] See Williams, D. U. (2020). Ungoverned and Ungovernable Spaces in West Africa: Facilitating Illicit Economy and Terrorist Financing, In: Ogujiuba, K., and Ogbonnaya, U. M. (eds.) *Contemporary Challenges in Africa's Development,* Western Cape: Reach Publishers, pp. 91–111.

[27] See Ogbonnaya, M. (2020). Tramadol Smugglers' Transnational Network from Nigeria to Niger, ENACT Observer, June 9. Available at https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/tramadol-smugglers-transnational-network-from-nigeria-to-niger

[28] Ellis, S. D. K. (2009). West Africa's International Drug Trade, *African Affairs,* 108(431), 171–196.

World Bank, youth unemployment rates at 25% in North Africa and 14% in the West African Sahel are higher than any other regions in the world.[29] Thus, the Sahel is relatively conducive for massive recruitment and radicalisation of the youth, which partly explains the upsurge in terrorist attacks within the region. According to the Border Security Report, a large majority of violent extremists within the Sahel are recruited from local communities to plan and conduct attacks against government institutions, military facilities, and/or rival organisations. Furthermore, the alliance between violent extremists and criminal organisations within the Sahel fuels a cycle of chronic poverty and violent land disputes, making terrorism an attractive employment opportunity and further contributing to the spread of violence across the region.[30]

Thirdly, the GTI has identified two primary correlates of terrorism: "state-sponsored violence against vulnerable communities" and "social hostilities between different ethnic and religious groups, lack of intergroup cohesion, and group grievances."[31] These socio-economic, structural, and historical drivers have made the countries of the Sahel, in varying degrees, vulnerable to insurgencies, criminal trafficking and religiously inspired terrorism. For example, the transnational character of Islam has contributed towards the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in the Sahel. Similarly, common languages and cultures of the peoples in the region have also complicated the problem of cross-border criminality in the regions. For instance, the Arabs are present in Mauritania, Niger, and Cameroon, and Hausa and Fulbe are widely spoken in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, and Ghana. Whenever violent conflicts had broken out in any country in the Sahel, it had always assumed a regional context. Usually, it does not take time for violence to spill over into neighbouring countries with the entire region enduring most of the

[29] The World Bank (2016). Middle East and North Africa—Fact Sheet. Available at http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01418/WEB/0__C301.HTM; See also Bisong, A. (2018). Youth Unemployment, Trade, and Migration in West Africa: Lessons and opportunities, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, November 27. Available at https://www.ictsd.org/opinion/youth-unemployment-trade-and-migration-in-west-africalessons-and-opportunities [Accessed April 9, 2020].

[30] Border Security Report (2020). The SAHEL Region Border Challenges. Webinar held on Wednesday, September 30 at Ware Road Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 9EY, London.

[31] Global Terrorism Index, Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism, New York: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2014, p. 8.

refugee influx. The Malian conflict subsequently spilled over into countries in West and Central Africa. Similarly, the Boko Haram insurgency has spread into Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.[32] Given that the Sahel is home to peoples with common history, traditions, and customs, there exist social and economic networks that are built around informal trading, occupational, and religious activities across many states that date back to the pre-colonial period and have been reinforced by contemporary process of globalisation. Trade, commerce, and religion have always linked the peoples of West African Sahel since the eleventh century. For instance, the old cities of Kano, Timbuktu, and Djenné served as religious centres and major hubs for the trans-Saharan trade. Terrorist groups in the region have maintained these routes to connect with each other.[33]

The fourth and the most important factor is that the region is populated by states that suffer from governance deficits and varying levels of fragility. In 2018, apart from Burkina Faso and Senegal, countries in the region ranked very low in the Fragile State Index (Table 21.2).

The 2019 Fragile State Index lists countries in the Sahel on the following categories:

Table 21.2 Fragile state index ranking for countries in the Sahel 2018

	Country	*Position*	*Score*
1	South Sudan	1	113.9
2	Sudan	5	110.6
3	Chad	8	109.4
4	Nigeria	13	101.6
5	Eritrea	19	98.1
6	Niger	20	97.4
7	Mauritania	28	93.1
8	Mali	31	92.9
9	Burkina Faso	44	88.0
10	Senegal	60	82.3

Source: 2018 Fragile State Index

[32] Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2018). African Union, AFISMA and the Mali Crisis: Rethinking Security Intervention and Democratic Consolidation in Africa, *Calabar Journal of Politics and Administration (CJOPAA),* 4(1): 14–34, July.

[33] Tanchum, M. (2012). Al-Qa'ida's West African Advance: Nigeria's Boko Haram, Mali's Touareg, and the Spread of Salafi Jihadism, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs,* 6(2) (2012), 75–90.

1. *Alert*

   i. Mauritania
   ii. Mali
   iii. Niger
   iv. Eritrea
   v. Cameroon
   vi. Nigeria

2. *High Alert*

   i. Sudan
   ii. Chad

3. *Very High Alert*

   i. South Sudan

As fragile states, the countries in the Sahel have several attributes that manifest in various ways, namely, a weak or ineffective central government that has little or no practical control over much of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force; the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions; inability to provide reasonable public services; widespread corruption and criminality; refugees, internally displaced persons, and involuntary movement of populations; and sharp economic decline.

Attacks, Fatalities and Resilience of Terrorist Groups in the Sahel

The number of attacks in the wider Sahel region has increased by 250 per cent since 2018, resulting in the death of more than 4,000 persons over the course of the past year. Figure 21.2 shows annual reported fatalities within the Western Sahel between 2011 and 30 June 2020.

The resilience of terrorist groups in the Sahel is enhanced by several factors. These include:

i. The exploitation of local conflicts.
ii. Porous and remote borders.
iii. Weak levels of governance.
iv. High levels of corruption, and
v. The proliferation of illicit activities such as the smuggling of weapons, drugs, motorcycles (and parts), as well as fuel trafficking, cattle rustling, and poaching provide violent extremist groups with financial, operational, and human resources.

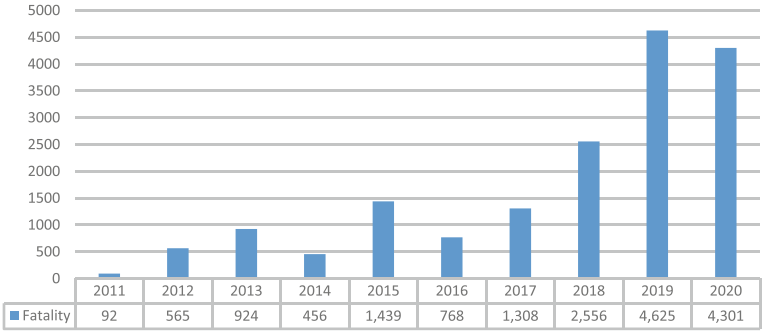

Fig. 21.2 Western Sahel: Annual reported fatalities (2011–2020) (*Source* Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project [ACLED] [as of 30 June 2020])

Overall, the propagation of black markets within these areas is indicative of the absence of effective security capacities to protect borders and manage cross-border trade within the wider Sahel region.[34] While states in the region remain resolute against terrorism, they lack the means to contain or degrade the threat on a sustained basis. The G5 Sahel Joint Force (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger), launched in 2017 to coordinate counter-terrorism operations among member states, has potential as a coordination mechanism but has not yet been capable of disrupting the growing terrorist footprint across the wider Sahel region. France's Operation Barkhane also plays a crucial role in countering terrorist groups and promoting a basic level of security, as does the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Responses to Terrorism in the Sahel

Responses to terrorism in the Sahel can be categorised into three broad issue areas, namely—military responses, diplomatic responses, and legislative responses. These responses have been national, bilateral, and multilateral in scope.

[34] Border Security Report (2020). The SAHEL Region Border Challenges. Webinar held on Wednesday, September 30 at Ware Road Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 9EY, London.

Military Responses

Some examples of military responses include the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA), which was an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) organised military mission sent to support the government of Mali against Islamist rebels in the Northern Mali conflict. The mission was authorised with UN Security Council Resolution 2085, passed on 20 December 2012, which "authorizes the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) for an initial period of one year."[35] In response to the escalating of violence and the capture of three largest cities in Mali namely, Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, in March 2012 by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), the ECOWAS authorised the deployment of AFISMA in January 2013. The MNLA was aided by an assortment of domestic and foreign terrorist groups, including the Islamist Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Jama'a al-Tawhid wa al Jihad fi Gharb Afriqiya (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, MUJWA). At inception, the AFISMA had a Nigerian deployment of air and ground forces in Mali, followed by deployments from other AFISMA troop-contributing countries.[36] Fighting alongside French and Malian forces, the AFISMA, with about 6,000 ECOWAS-led troops, dislodged the terrorist groups and recaptured northern Mali. However, in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 of April 2013, the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, transferred its authority to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on 1 July 2013.

Although AFISMA succeeded in dislodging the terrorist groups, recapturing northern Mali, and re-establishing democratic governance in the country, it failed to address the root causes of the recurrent anti-state rebellion and secessionist tendencies in the country. This has once again resulted in the resurgence of hostilities in northern Mali that are once again threatening the security and socio-political stability and economic

[35] UNSC Resolution 2085 was unanimously adopted on 20 December 2012, authorising the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) to ensure the full restoration of Mali's constitutional order and territorial integrity.

[36] AFISMA troop-contributing countries included Chad, 2,000 troops; Nigeria, 1,200; Togo, 733; Benin, 650; Burkina Faso, 500; Senegal, 500; Niger, 500; Guinea, 144; and Ghana, 120.

growth of the country and by extension, the West African sub-region. As Mehari Taddele Maru noted, the crisis in Mali indicates the need for a shift of mission and focus from purely hard security to building a legitimate democratic state that can deliver. Securitising and democratising Mali requires more resilient democratic states in the Sahel region.[37]

Besides AFISMA, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) established the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 2014. The establishment of the MNJTF was an outcome of a meeting hosted in May 2014 by the President of France, Francois Hollande, under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The meeting was attended by Heads of State of the Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Chad, Republic of Niger, and Nigeria with the United Kingdom and the United States as observers. A major outcome of the summit was the creation of an intelligence-pooling unit on the existing protocol of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, a security framework that was established in 1964. The fusion centre, hosted by Nigeria provides a platform for intelligence sharing by security services of Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria on insurgency. Its output feeds the Multinational Joint Task Force. This Intelligence fusion centre has enriched improved cooperation on intelligence in the sub-region and positively impacted on the operations of the MJTF in terms of service delivery.

There is also the G5 Sahel (G5S), formed on 16 February 2014 in Nouakchott, Mauritania as an institutional framework for coordination of regional cooperation in development policies and security matters. It consists of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The purpose of G5 Sahel is to strengthen the bond between economic development and security, and to battle the threat of jihadist organisations operating in the region, namely AQIM, MUJWA, Al-Mourabitoun, Boko Haram, among others. However, seven years after the Sahel's five countries set up the G5 Sahel joint force (FC-G5S) as a means of settling the armed conflicts within the region, multiple questions have been raised and the force is struggling to find its place in the region. It has been marred by evident inter-agency rivalry, lack of intelligence coordination and sharing,

[37] Maru, M. T. (2013). African-Led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA): Military Ahead of Politics, Report of Al Jazeera Center for Studies, February 14.

amidst the mutating nature of terrorism, shifting alliances, coordination among terrorist networks.[38]

There is also Operation Barkhane, which is permanently headquartered in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. Led by the French military against Islamist groups in the Sahel, Operation Barkhane is an anti-insurgent operation that started in August 2014 and consists of about 5,000 French force. The operation is led in cooperation with five countries, all of which are former French colonies that span the Sahel: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. France had initially intervened in Mali in 2013 as part of Operation Serval, which successfully regained the northern part of the country from Islamist groups. Operation Barkhane sustained the success and also expanded French military presence and operations over a vast area of the Sahel region. The operation has the stated aim of helping the countries' governments to maintain control of their territory and preventing the region from becoming a haven for Islamist terrorist groups that plan to attack France and Europe. Beside the French-led Operation Barkhane, there is the Takuba Task Force (TTF), which is a European Union (EU) military task force led by Sweden. Its mandate is to advise, assist and accompany Malian Armed Forces, in coordination with G5-Sahel partners and other international actors on the ground. TTF operates from Malian Armed Forces (FAMa) bases located in Gao, Ansogo, Menaka, and N'Djamena in Chad.

Diplomatic Responses

In 2013, ECOWAS launched its Political Declaration and Common Position Against Terrorism. This is often referred to as the ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy. It is based on three major pillars—Prevent, Pursue, and Reconstruct. These pillars comprise of targets and measures to be adopted in combating the scourge of terrorism in the region. In addition, as a follow-up, the Authority of the ECOWAS and G5 Sahel Heads of State held and extraordinary summit on counterterrorism at Ouagadougou in September 2019 wherein the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to suppress the scourge of terrorism in the region.

[38] Abi-Hanna, T. (2020). A Coordinated Jihadist Campaign Menaces the Sahel, Strator Worldview and Assessments, March 2. Available at https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/coordinated-jihadist-campaign-looms-over-sahel-terrorism-islamist-state-militants-africa.

The diplomatic responses to terrorism in the Sahel include the Sahel Alliance framework, which was launched in 2017 by France, Germany, and the European Union with about 12 donors including the African Development Bank (A*f*DB), the World Bank (WB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others. The Sahel Alliance aims to improve the effectiveness of development assistance in the area and be a point of contact for the G5 on development issues. Thus, the Alliance coordinates the activities of major development partners in the region. In 2018, member countries and donors invested €1.9 billion in the G5 Sahel countries and in 2019, ECOWAS mobilised US$1b to tackle terrorism in the region.

Legislative Responses

Countries within the Sahel region have relied on several United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions to enact regional and national anti-terrorism legislation. For instance, in 2011, Nigeria enacted the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011, which was amended in 2013 and in 2022 to what is referred to as the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 among other national legislations. Similarly, Ghana and the Francophone states in West Africa have also various legislations in support of national efforts at countering the terrorist challenge within their respective jurisdictions.

Challenges of Responses

Despite these responses, terrorism continue to threaten human and national security, the sovereignty and territoriality of nation-states in West Africa and the Sahel. It also threatens the legitimacy and stability of political regimes in the region where counterterrorism initiatives and operations are largely driven by foreign actors. This challenges national ownership of the initiatives and the programmes, the competencies, and capacities of the militaries of member states, as well as the legitimacy of the member states. Secondly, counterterrorism operations in the Sahel are characterised by international politics, causing a division between

national and international interests and challenges of collaborations, especially among the G5 Sahel task force.[39] As Yasmina Allouche have noted, the Sahel region and indeed Africa, has become the playground of power players in counterterrorism guises.[40]

Thirdly, counterterrorism initiatives in the Sahel are not broad-based, comprehensive, and inclusive. They exclude local populations and indigenous groups as strategic allies. As Akinola Olojo, et al. have observed, terrorism in the Sahel has reached an impasse, with states unable to achieve total military victory. They further observed that increased terrorism in the Sahel is mainly a consequence of decades of weak governance, which requires the inclusion of local populations as strategic allies.[41] Most fundamentally, counterterrorism initiatives in the Sahel have focused extensively on hard security to the detriment of development and accountable leadership, which fundamentally do not seek to address the structural and fundamental root causes of terrorism.[42] The initiatives exclude national counter-narratives as a strategy. Over time, the excessive militarisation of counterterrorism strategies and operations in the region have been characterised by evident inter-agency rivalry, lack of intelligence coordination and sharing and worsened by the mutating nature of terrorism, shifting alliances, and coordination among terrorist networks.[43] This has been complicated by the absence of early warning systems as part of conflict management strategies by many countries and regional organisations, as well as the absence of effective coordination among intervening organisations.

[39] Devermont, J. (2019). Politics at the Heart of the Crisis in the Sahel, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Briefs, December. Available at https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/191206_Devermont_SahelCrisis_layout_v5.pdf

[40] Allouche, Y. (2019). Africa: The Playground of Power Players and Counterterrorism Guises, Istanbul: TRT World Research Centre.

[41] Olojo, A., Dakono, B., and Maiga, I. (2020). Insecurity in the Sahel Won't be Solved at High-level Summits, ISS Today, February 10. Available at https://issafrica.org/iss-today/insecurity-in-the-sahel-wont-be-solved-at-high-level-summits

[42] See Eriksson, M. (2018). Security Without Sabre-rattling: Counteracting Increased Militarisation in Africa. Nordic Africa Institute Policy Note No.2.

[43] Abi-Hanna, T. (2020). A Coordinated Jihadist Campaign Menaces the Sahel, Strator Worldview and Assessments, March 2. Available at https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/coordinated-jihadist-campaign-looms-over-sahel-terrorism-islamist-state-militants-africa.

Finally, responses to terrorism in the Sahel are challenged by institutional and institutionalised corruption in the security sector. With regards to Nigeria, Maurice Ogbonnaya has noted that corruption undermines effective security force action by hollowing out the military capabilities and the secrecy surrounding military spending for counterterrorism encourages misappropriation. Thus, he asserted that rooting out corruption in the security sector will help the country address its growing terror threat.[44]

Conclusion

The Sahel region has faced an unprecedented wave of terrorism-related violence, especially since 2011. Terrorism in the region is occasioned by several factors including local conflicts, porous, and remote borders, governance deficit and state fragility, high levels of corruption, and the proliferation of illicit activities such as the smuggling of weapons, drugs, as well as fuel trafficking, cattle rustling, and poaching, among others. Terrorist groups have exploited these factors to provide violent extremist groups with financial, operational, and human resources.

Despite responses by national governments and multilateral governance bodies, terrorism in the region continues to pose serious security challenges as terrorist organisations have expanded their operations in areas such as north and central Mali and Liptako-Gourma, the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, fostering an environment of massive displacement and perpetual violence across the region. While states in the region remain resolute against terrorism, they lack the means and capabilities to contain the threat on a sustained basis. Largely, responses to terrorism in the region have been characterised by excessive militarization. While military responses may be an effective counterterrorism tool, it has mostly been merely superficial because alone, it does not address the ecological, anthropological, socio-economic, and political factors that cause and sustain the rise and prevalence of terrorism.

The implication of the aforementioned is that countering terrorism in the region requires a rethink of extant strategies and operations. Otherwise, the region will remain troubled by terrorism for a long time in the

[44] Ogbonnaya, M. (2020). Has Counter-terrorism Become a Profitable Business in Nigeria? ISS Today, February 4. Available at https://issafrica.org/iss-today/has-counter-terrorism-become-a-profitable-business-in-nigeria.

future. However, one solution to terrorist expansionism and perpetuation of insecurity in the Sahel region may lie in Antonio Guterres' submission that "the creation of open, equitable, inclusive, and pluralist societies, based on the full respect of human rights and with economic opportunities for all, represents the most tangible and meaningful alternative to violent extremism."[45]

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CHAPTER 22

Terrorism in Burkina Faso: Trends and Dynamics

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Munachi Nice Okereke

Introduction

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report released in 2024 clearly ranked Burkina Faso as the number one terrorism most affected country in 2023 with about 2,000 people killed in 258 terrorist attacks and more than two million people were displaced accordingly.[1] The baseline assessment for 2024 reveals that Burkina Faso saw the second largest fall in terrorism with 1,532 deaths representing one-fifth of global fatalities put at 7,555

[1] Institute of Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index" Sydney, February 2024, https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GTI-2024-web-290224.pdf (accessed 15 December 2024).

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@gmail.com; emekaokereke@ndc.gov.ng

M. N. Okereke
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

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deaths[2]. By this, Burkina Faso displacing, Afghanistan and Iraq which always ranked tops in over a decade. To understand Burkina Faso's vulnerability to terrorist attacks, a reflection on the geo-strategic dynamics of the country is explained below.

Burkina Faso is a landlocked West African country located in the Sahel belt bordering the Sahara Desert. It has a total area of 274,200 square kilometers comprising 273,800 square kilometers of land and 400 square kilometers of water. Burkina Faso also shares international boundaries of 3,611 kilometers with six neighboring West African countries: Benin (385 kilometers), Cote d'Ivoire (545 kilometers), Ghana (602 kilometers), Mali (1,325 kilometers), Niger, (622 kilometers) and Togo (131 kilometers).[3] The country is endowed with rich deposits of mineral resources such as gold, manganese, zinc, limestone, marble, phosphate, pumice and salt.

The estimated population of Burkina Faso as of July 2018 was 19.7 million persons. The population is composed of several ethnic nationalities: Mossi (52 percent), Fulani (8.4 percent), Gurma (7 percent), Bobo (4.9 percent), Gurunsi (4.6 percent), Senufo (4.5 percent), Bissa (3.7 percent), Lobi (2.4 percent), Dagara (2.4 percent), Tuareg/Bella (1.9 percent) and others (7.2 percent).[4] It is important to note that prior to the scourge of terrorism in Burkina Faso, the various ethnic groups co-existed in relative harmony, devoid of inter-group hostilities and strengthened by inter-group marriages among other socio-cultural engagements. In terms of religious affiliation, Muslims constitute 61.5 percent of the population and they are predominantly Sunni. Adherents of Traditional African Religion (TAR) constitute 7.8 percent, while Christians constitute 29.8 percent of which 23.3 percent are Roman Catholics while the remaining 6.5 percent are Protestant Christians.[5] It is important to note that despite the ethnic and religious diversities in Burkina

[2] Institute of Economics and Peace, (2024). "Global Terrorism Index" Sydney, February, https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GTI-2024-web-290224.pdf (accessed 15 December 2024). Also see Institute of Economics and Peace,(2025). "Global Terrorism Index" Sydney, March, https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Global-Terrorism-Index-2025.pdf

[3] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "Burkina Faso" *The World Factbook*, accessed 21 January 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burkina-faso/.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Faso, the population experienced a long history of inter-group harmony. However, following the overthrow of former Burkina Faso President, Blaise Campaore, on 31 October 2014 and the subsequent outbreak of terrorist attacks in the country, the activities of terrorists struck at the communal bonds upon which the existing inter-group harmony was based. With the rise of terrorism, communal violence between Fulani pastoralists and sedentary Mossi people escalated, thereby stimulating distrust and mutual suspicion within these communities. The outbreak of terrorism following Campaore's removal led many to believe the leader's personal qualities were central in preventing and reducing terrorist threats and violent extremism in Burkina Faso.

This chapter examines the nature of terrorism in Burkina Faso focusing briefly on the history of political change in the country, activities of terrorist groups and the counterterrorism measures adopted by the national government. It connects Burkina Faso's vulnerabilities to terrorism with the existence of terrorist cells in the country and its geographical proximity to Mali and Niger, and with institutional weaknesses that characterize the state in Burkina Faso.

Major Political Trends in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso attained independence from France on 5 August 1960 under the name Upper Volta.

In 1984, it changed its name to Burkina Faso, which means 'Land of the Incorruptible People' in the native Mossi language. In keeping with the new name, nationals of Burkina Faso are referred to as Burkinabe. The population of Burkina Faso is estimated at 20.9 million people as at 2020 and about half of the population is under 15 years and a median age of the population is 17.6 years.[6]

The country has 13 administrative divisions including: Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Centre, Centre-Est, Centre-Nord, Centre-Ouest, Centre-Sud, Est, Hauts-Bassins, Nord, Plateau-Central, Sahel and Sud-Ouest. The political capital city of the country is Ouagadougou. The administrative map of Burkina Faso is shown below.

[6] World Population Review, "Burkina Faso Population 2022: Demographic, Maps, Graph" https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/burkina-faso-population (accessed 22 March 2022).

The country has experienced eight successful military coups and a few failed coups between 1960 and 2015. Political change in the country has only been attained through coups.[7] Concerning successful military coups, Burkina Faso experienced the overthrow of President Maurice Yameogo following a military coup executed by the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Aboubakar Sangoulé Lamizana on 4 January 1966. The Lamizana regime was itself overthrown on 25 November 1980 by Colonel Saye Zerbo while Major (Dr) Jean Baptiste Ouedrago successfully overthrew the regime of Saye Zerbo on 7 November 1982.[8] The duo of Captain Thomas Sankara and Captain Blaise Campaore successfully overthrew the Ouedrago regime in August 1983 and Sankara assumed the leadership of the country. He was, however, assassinated on 15 October 1987 in a palace coup led by Captain Campaore. The succeeding regime of Blaise Campaore transformed into a civilian administration after it organized and contested elections in 1991. The attempt by Campaore to amend the country's constitution to enable him bid for a third term in office sparked popular unrest involving several interest groups, trade unions and thousands of demonstrators across the country especially in Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulassou. In response, Campaore sacked the Government and declared a national emergency while the military high command dissolved the parliament and created an interim military structure led by Army Chief Honore Traore Nabere to facilitate the transition process.[9] Burkina Faso experienced another military coup on 16 September 2015 organized by Blaise Campaore loyalists led by General Gilbert Diendere who attempted to overthrow the country's Acting President Kafando using the remnants of Campaore's presidential guards.

In January 2022, Burkina Faso witnessed a mutiny and constitutional interregnum which led to the eventual overthrow of President Roch Marc Christian Kabore in a military coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri

[7] Abdoulie Sawo, "The Chronology of Military Coup d'etat and Regimes in Burkina Faso: 1980-2015" *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations,* Volume 48 (2017), 3.

[8] Safwene Grira, "Burkina Faso: 6 coups in 54 years of independence" accessed 25 January 2021 https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/burkina-faso-6-coups-in-54-years-of-independence/105717.

[9] Ibid.

Sandaogo Damiba.[10] The coup plotters leveraged on the failure of the government to defeat the Islamist insurgency in the country since 2015 as public confidence in the capability of President Kabore's ability in the management of the security crisis dropped significantly since 2021.[11] It is important to note that while the ECOWAS condemned the unconstitutional change of government in Burkina Faso since it violates its Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001), the coup plotters received widespread support from the local population in Burkina Faso.[12] Yet, the apparent inability of the Damiba-led regime to combat the terrorists ravaging the country and his growing bond with deposed Head of State, Blaise Campaore led to his overthrow in another military coup on 30 September 2022. The new administration of Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Traore pledged commitment and renewed vigor in the war against terrorism.[13]

Overview of Terrorism in Burkina Faso

Prior to the second decade of the twenty-first century, Burkina Faso had no record of terrorism. This situation changed significantly after the exit of Blaise Campaore from power. One major incident that unequivocally introduced Burkina Faso into the theater of concern for global terrorism was the January 2016 terrorist attack in Ouagadougou. Official reports indicated 28 persons were killed while 56 others were injured when armed men of AQIM and al-Mourabitoum attacked Hotel Splendid

[10] Ornella Moderan and Fahiraman Rodrigue Kone, "What caused the coup in Burkina Faso?" ISS Today, 3 February 2022, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/what-caused-the-coup-in-burkina-faso (accessed 22 March 2022).

[11] Beverly Ochieng, "Burkina Faso coup: Why soldiers have overthrown President Kabore" BBC News, 25 January 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-60112043 (accessed 22 March 2022).

[12] "Burkina Faso coup leader Damiba inaugurated as president" *Al Jazeera News,* 16 February 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/16/burkina-faso-coup-leader-inaugurated-as-president (accessed 22 March 2022).

[13] Thiem Ndiaga and Anne Mimault, "Burkina Faso Soldiers Announce Overthrow of Military Government" *Reuters* 1 October 2022; www.reuters.com (accessed 3 October 2022).

and the adjacent Cappuccino café.[14] The nationality of those killed included six Canadians, five Burkinabes, two French nationals, two Swiss nationals, one Dutch volunteer and one American missionary.[15] The Al Mourabitoum was founded in 2013 following the merger of the Movement for Tawhid (Unity) and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al-Mulathamun Masked Ones Brigade, founded by Mokhtar Belmokhtar after his breakaway from Abdelmalek Droukdel's led AQIM.[16]

In another incident, about 40 heavily armed Islamist fighters, loaded in pick-up vans and riding on motorbikes, attacked a military base at Nassoumbou in Soum province on 16 December 2016, killing 12 soldiers.[17] Additionally, terrorist acts in Burkina Faso have also been directed at the minority Christian population in the country as Christian churches and individuals with Christian accouterments have been targeted. Statistics drawn from the Armed Conflict Location Events Database (ACLED) indicate that the incidents of terrorism in Burkina Faso rapidly increased from one attack in 2015 to 38 attacks in 2016, and steadily rose to 66 attacks in 2017, 173 in 2018 and 349 in 2019.[18] The U.S Department of State reports that the incidence of terrorism in Burkina Faso experienced a 250 percent increase between 2018 and 2019 with remarkable increases in the frequency and lethality of attacks in 2019.[19]

The 12 May 2019 attack on Sunday worshipers at a Roman Catholic Church in Dablo in which a priest and five other persons were killed, was a clear indication of Christians being targeted. These terrorist attacks on Christians were a direct assault on the social bond that united the diverse

[14] "Burkina Faso attack: Foreigners killed at luxury hotel" British Broadcasting Corporation, 16 January 2016, accessed 26 January 2021, https://www.bbc.co/news/world-africa-35332792.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Profile Al-Mourabioun" BBC News, 16 January 2016, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34881170.

[17] "Deadly attack target army base in Burkina Faso" Al Jazeera News, 16 December 2016; accessed 28 January 2021https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/16/deadly-attack-targets-army-base-in-burkina-faso.

[18] Armed Conflict Location Events & Data cited in International Crisis Group (ICG), Stopping the Spiral of Violence" *Africa Report* N° 287, 24 February 2020.

[19] United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Burkina Faso" Bureau of Counterterrorism, accessed 25 January 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/burkina-faso/.

inhabitants of the communities across Burkina Faso. This is particularly true of the sustained attacks in Ouagadougou, East province, Boucle du Mouhoun, North and Centre-North provinces. The result is that Burkina Faso has become increasingly identified as a country under siege by terrorism with growing security implications at national and regional levels. Below is a list of the main terrorist attacks in 2019:

a. A terrorist attack on Sunday worshipers at a Roman Catholic Church in Dablo killed a priest and five other persons on 12 May 2019.
b. A total of 24 Burkinabe soldiers were killed following attacks on a Koudougou military outpost. Another 13 soldiers were wounded on 19 August 2019. This was unarguably the most audacious terrorist attack on defense and security assets in the country.
c. On 3 November 2019, the Mayor of Djibo and a Member of Parliament in the Sahel region were killed. This was considered an incident of high-level political assassination.
d. A convoy carrying staff and contractors at a Canadian mining company were attacked by terrorists linked to IS on 6 November 2019 in which 39 civilians were killed while 60 other persons were injured.
e. Islamic State fighters killed seven security personnel and 35 civilians on 24 December 2019. Burkinabe defense and security personnel killed 80 of the attackers.

The cumulative statistics of terrorist attacks on Burkina Faso rose to 553 in January 2020.[20] As of August 2020, available statistics from the Economic and Social Council (CES) of Burkina Faso indicate that about 1,600 people were killed from terrorist attacks in the country.[21] Six volunteers for the Defence of the Fatherland (VDP) were killed and two others injured in Touldeni village, following a terrorist attack on 24 September 2020. However, 20 of the terrorists were killed in a counterattack by the VDP.[22] In another incident, 25 people were killed following a terrorist

[20] ICG, Op. Cit.

[21] Dramane Traore, "At least 14 soldiers killed in Burkina Faso ambush" *Anadolu Agency*, 13 November 2020; accessed 27 January 2021, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/at-least-14-soldiers-killed-in-burkina-faso-ambush/2042231.

[22] "Africa Terrorism Bulletin" African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, December 2020, accessed 13 January 2021, https://caert.org.dz/all-activities/.

attack in the Gourma province of Burkina Faso while terrorist fighters ambushed a military convoy along Tinakof-Beldiabe road in the northern province of Oudalan on 11 November 2020.[23] This attack was the third in the Sahel and north-central Burkina Faso within a fortnight. Communication Minister, Remis Dandjinou announced that 14 soldiers were killed in the incident while eight others were wounded.[24] The recurrence of dastardly terrorist attacks heightened apprehension as the country's presidential and parliamentary elections were to be held in the same month.

The consequences of terrorism in Burkina Faso include the loss of lives and property and the destruction of critical infrastructure. Terrorism has also eroded respect for national values and fractured community bonds and respect for national values. In addition to the fatalities, clashes between Burkina Faso defense and security forces with terrorists resulted in the displacement of an estimated 560,000 Burkinabes at the end of 2019. As noted by the Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect, 13.4 million people in Burkina Faso are in need of humanitarian assistance while 7 million suffer acute food insecurity.[25]

Despite sharing contiguous borders with Mali and Niger, which have active terrorism organizations, notably Al-Qaeda, Burkina Faso was largely spared the scourge of domestic terrorism during the 50 years of its political independence. The sudden terrorism outbreak and degeneration of Burkina Faso as a country with a terrorism problem was heralded by the forced exit of Blaise Campaore from power in 2014. His departure stimulated growing curiosity and speculation that the former Burkinabe leader was instrumental in the rise of terrorist activity. Reviewing former President Campaore's role in the region, Amy Niang of the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa) argued that 'Blaise Compaore's muddled past, as regard to his assent to power, was such that his name was for a long while associated with political banditry and mercenary politics.'[26] While in power, Campaore was identified as a personality whose

[23] Dramane Traore, *Op. Cit*.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect, "Burkina Faso" 15 January 2021, accessed 26 January 2021, https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/burkina-faso/.

[26] Amy Niang, "Blaise Compaoré in the Resolution of the Ivorian Conflict: From Belligerent to Mediator-In-Chief" New York, Social Science Research Council (SSRC), 2016, 5.

survival depended on dealings not only with Burkina Faso but also with rebels involved in conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Campaore was also accused of playing the role of Chief-Mediator-Diplomat in quelling conflicts in Mali and negotiating the release of western hostages abducted by armed militant groups in parts of the Sahel.[27] Yet, prior to his forced exit from power, Campaore negotiated the truce between Bamako and some armed groups in 2012 which some analysts posit spared his country from extremist violence.[28] It is believed that these interventions and interactions with non-state armed groups under Campaore contributed to sparing Burkina Faso from terrorist attacks prior to his exit. The eventual escalation of incidents of terrorism in the post Campaore years has made evident the long-term futility of this approach. Critics contend that far reaching counterterrorism measures ought to have been put in place to forestall the inherent threats.

It is also reasoned that the terrorism in Burkina Faso could be attributed to the Arab Spring in North Africa, particularly with regards to Libya. This is not unconnected to the fact that the overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya signified a disruption of security equilibrium in the Sahel which subsequently resulted in the severance of the umbilical cord of support which Libya under the Gaddafi regime extended to poor and fragile states in Africa in anticipation of diplomatic support at various fora. Laurent Ammour, an expert in North African affairs notes that the collapse of the Gaddafi regime brought along the accompanying blurring of hierarchies between urban centers of power and marginalized peripheries, resurgence of protests in the outlying territories and emergence of security vacuum in neighboring countries.[29] The collapse of Gaddafi further reopened old conflicts such as the Tuareg crisis in Mali and its cross-border security implications too in Burkina Faso.

[27] United Nations, Summary Report along with Observations by the Chairman on the Exploratory Hearing on Sierra Leone Diamonds (31 July and 1 August 2000), UN S/2000/1150, New York, United Nations, 2000.

[28] Roland Benedikter and Ismaila Ouedrogo, "Extremist Expansion in Burkina Faso: Origin and Solutions" in IPI Global Observatory, 12 May 2017, accessed 25 January 2021, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/05/burkina-fas-extremism-al-aqeda-ansarul-islam/.

[29] Laurence Aida Ammour "Security Issues Emerging in the Maghreb and the Sahel after the Arab Spring", accessed 20 April 2021, https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/ammour_en.pdf.

Roland Benedikter and Ismaila Ouedraogo identified six underlying variables that facilitated increased terrorism in Burkina Faso. These include the forced resignation of Campaore from power. Other factors identified with increased terrorism include: the existence of insecure political and institutional structure alongside a deeply divided opposition, excessive dependence of the population on the inflow of remittances from the Burkina Faso Diaspora and relatively scarce attention paid to Burkina Faso by the international community.[30] Kate Hairsine, a seasoned journalist and author on African affairs, adds that the Campaore regime maintained links with terrorist groups operating outside Burkina Faso while in power but this critical link was severed with his exit from office.[31] Therefore, it was not unexpected that in the aftermath of the Campaore's regime collapse, elements of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Ansar ul-Islam (Defenders of Islam) both made incursions into parts of northern Burkina Faso to spread their doctrine and networks.

Profile of Active Pseudo-Islamist Groups in Burkina Faso

Presently, the main terrorist organizations in Burkina Faso are the Al-Qaeda linked Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (JNIM), otherwise known as the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel (ISGS). Both organizations are an amalgamation of various extremist groups but while the JNIM is a cell of the Al-Qaeda Network (AQN), the ISGS is aligned to the Islamic State.

Prior to their emergence, the Ansar ul-Islam lil-Ichadwal Jihad (IRSAD) (or Ansarul Islam, Ansarul Islam, Ansar al-Islam, Defenders of Islam) under the leadership of Malam Dicko was considered the main home-grown terrorist group in the country. On 26 February 2018, the U.S. Department of State designated IRSAD as a terrorist group that threatens the security of U.S. nationals and the national security, foreign

[30] Ibid.

[31] Kate Hairsine, "Burkina Faso's election overshadowed by terrorism" in Deutsch Welle (DW) News, accessed 26 January 2021, https://www.dw.com/en/burkina-fasos-election-overshadowed-by-terrorism/a-55674584.

policy or economy of the U.S.[32] This designation was consistent with the provisions of Section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224 of September 2001 as amended.

The IRSAD, however, merged with the Ansar al-Din, AQIM, al-Mourabitoun and Katiba Macina in March 2017 to form the JNIM which it announced through a recorded video clip.[33] Malam Dicko, who remained loyal to Iyad al-Ghali, was killed in April 2017 during Operation Bayard, a joint operation involving Burkina Faso military and French troops drawn from Operation Barkhane, a French military led counterterrorism operation in the Sahel initiated in August 2014 and was subsequently replaced by his brother, Jaffar.[34] The JNIM is an umbrella organization including al-Qaeda linked groups in the Sahel under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghali. Its core objective is to impose its version of Islamic law in Mali and drive away foreign troops from the country while also spreading its influence beyond Mali into neighboring Burkina Faso and the greater Sahel.

The ISGS emerged in 2015 and engaged in transnational terrorism across the Liptako-Gourma border areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger where it sought the control of revenue-generating activities.[35] The illicit trafficking of weapons, drugs, motorcycle and fuel as well as cattle rustling, artisanal gold mining and poaching are at the heart of terror groups' survival.[36] The ISGS, is a breakaway faction of al-Mourabitoum but has pledged allegiance to IS. The ISGS is very active and the dominant terror group in the Burkina Faso-Mali shared border areas with the

[32] "The Federal Register: The Daily Journal of United States Government" National Archives, accessed 19 April 2021, https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/02/26/2018-03817/eo-13224-designation-of-ansarul-islam-aka-ansarour-islam-aka-ansar-al-islam-aka-defenders-of-islam.

[33] "Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel" European Council for Foreign Relations, accessed 28 January 2021, https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping/jnim.

[34] Ibid.

[35] "Islamic State in the Greater Sahara Expanding its Threats and Reach in the Sahel" African Centre for Strategic Studies, 18 December 2020; accessed 29 January 2021, https://africacentre.org/spotlight/Islamic-state-in-the-greater-sahara-expanding-its-threat-and-reach-in-the-sahel/.

[36] William Assanyo, "Illicit activities provide violent extremist groups with financial, operational and human resources" ISS Today, 10 December 2019, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-organised-crime-fuelling-terror-groups-in-liptako-gourma (accessed 22 march 2022).

Tillaberi region of Niger. The group, which recorded about 524 attacks by the end of 2019, often attacks civilian populations and has extended its targets to lucrative smuggling routes and communities engaged in the artisanal mining of gold.[37]

It is estimated that the combined attacks by the JNIM and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) raised the incidents of terrorism in Burkina Faso by more than 250 percent over 2018. Specifically, a total of nine terrorist attacks were executed on mining sites in Burkina Faso between September 2017 and January 2018 leading to several deaths and injuries and the closure of some mining companies.

The escalation of terrorist attacks, especially the killing of 10 gendarmes by the JNIM at Sourou town in Boucle du Mouhoun near the borders with Mali, resulted in the declaration of a State of Emergency (SoE) in four provinces near the shared borders with Mali namely Nord, Sahel, Hauts-Bassins and Boucle du Mouhoun.[38] The SoE was also extended to the Est and Centre Est provinces along the border with Benin and Togo.

Fighters aligned to both groups executed high-level targeted political assassinations, attacks on civilians and defense and security forces including perpetrating inter-group conflicts that created human displacements, injuries and deaths especially in the far north and east of Burkina Faso.[39] The common tactics used by the terrorists include guerrilla warfare and ambush, high-level targeted political assassinations and the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

It is estimated that between 2017 and 2023, the JNIM was responsible for over 50 percent of terrorist attacks in the Sahel using increased capabilities aided by roadside bombs, mortars, landmines and rockets.[40]

[37] Ibid.

[38] Editor, "Burkina Faso Declares State of Emergency in 6 Provinces" Africa Times, 31 December 2018, https://africatimes.com/2018/12/31/burkina-faso-declares-state-of-emergency-in-6-provinces/.

[39] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019", United States Bureau of Counterterrorism, accessed 18 April 2021, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1289696/download.

[40] Shola Lawal, "Nearly 200 people dead: What's behind armed attacks in Burkina Faso?" Aljazeera News 24 August 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/26/nearly-200-people-dead-whats-behind-armed-attacks-in-burkina-faso (accessed 11 December 2024).

The Armed Conflicts Location and Event Data (ACLED) for 2020 classified incidents of terrorist violence by the ISGS as remote violence (33), battles (85), clashes with the JNIM (40), and violence against civilians (115).[41] Targets are areas frequented by foreigners such as hotels and cafes, tourist sites, northern borders, military assets, religious institutions and places of worship. Schools were burned and teachers were killed for teaching secular state curricula.

Following increased attacks in the border areas and allegations of human rights violations leveled against the defense and security forces, several troops withdrew from outposts in the northernmost frontiers thereby making the area more vulnerable to the activities of terrorists. In January 2021, French troops attached to Operation Barkhane killed over 20 fighters near Burkina Faso's border with Mali.[42] The incident of terrorism in Burkina Faso was also marked by the horrific murder of nine Ahmadi Muslims by gunmen who invaded a mosque of an Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Mehdiabad near the town of Dori on 11 January 2023 declaring the Ahmadi as infidels that should renounce Ahmadiyyat belief system.[43] This incident tended to stimulate mutual distrust between the Ahmadi Muslims and adherents of the Wahhabi sect in the community whose mosque remained untouched while the surviving Ahmadi sect members were forced to migrate from the village. In February 2024, the JNIM killed over 170 people including women and children at various villages Natiaboani, Essakane, Kamsilga, Soroe and Nodin in northern Burkina Faso. More than 100 Burkina Faso soldiers were killed by the JNIM fighters who attacked an army base in the northern region of Mansila near Niger looting weapons in June 2024. In another incident, terrorist attacked a military convoy at Tawori village in August 2024,

[41] "Islamic State in the Greater Sahara Expanding its Threat and Reach in the Sahel" ACLED project, 2020 Projections, cited in African Centre for Strategic Studies, 18 December 2020, accessed 29 January 2021, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/islamic-state-in-the-greater-sahara-expanding-its-threat-and-reach-in-the-sahel/.

[42] "Burkina Faso: Extremism and Terrorism" Counter Extremism Project, accessed 18th April 2021, https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/burkina-faso

[43] Ahmadiyya Muslim Foreign Missions Office, "January 11, 2023: We are Aggrieved to Report an Incident of a Terrorist Attac on a Local Ahmadiyya Community in Mahdiabad - A Remote Village in Burkina Faso" *Flash - Human Rights* 12 January 2023.

resulted to the death of about 150 Burkina Faso soldiers.[44] Burkina Faso further suffered another devastating terrorist attack in Barsalogho town in the Centre North on 24th August 2024 which culminated in the death of over 200 civilians.[45]

It is important to note that prior to the emergence of the ISGS, al-Qaeda linked groups have held sway in the Sahel. The major Al-Qaeda group operating in the West African Sahel was the Algerian extremist Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The GSPC later transformed into the Al-Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) established bases in northern Mali in response to counterterrorism offensives of the Algerian government. With the emergence of the ISGS to expand influence and control revenue and smuggling routes in communities where artisanal gold mining takes place brought the ISGS into direct confrontation with the JNIM.

In the bid to avert rivalries, reconciliatory meetings were held between Jaffar Dicko who led the Ansar ul-Islam in Burkina Faso and Abu Walid al-Sahrawi of the ISGS in September 2019. Despite the meetings, deadly confrontations continued to characterize the relationship between the JNIM and ISGS-linked groups in Burkina Faso especially in the Soum province and by mid-2020, the competitive combat had spilled over in the Gourma area on both sides of the Mali-Burkina Faso border especially in Korfoueyouey, Arayel, Aebinda, Nassaoumbou and Pobe.[46]

Official Response to Terrorism in Burkina Faso

The Burkinabe government launched major counterterrorism offensives focusing on the Eastern, Northern and Centre-North regions. It has also continued to increase the intelligence and investigative capacity of its

[44] Shola Lawal, "Nearly 200 people dead: What's behind armed attacks in Burkina Faso?" Aljazeera News 24 August 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/26/nearly-200-people-dead-whats-behind-armed-attacks-in-burkina-faso (accessed 11 December 2024).

[45] Economic Community of West African States "Communique sur les Violentes Attaques Terrorist a Barsalogho au Burkina Faso" Abuja, 29th August 2024. Also see.

[46] Flore Berger, "Sahel: A New Battlefield between IS and Al Qaeda? *The Africa Report,* Thursday 4 June 2020, accessed 27 January 2021, https://www.theafricareport.com/29184/sahel-a-new-battlefield-between-is-and-al-qaeda/.

defense and security institutions. This is because counterterrorism engagements in Burkina Faso are multi-layered and multi-agency in nature, involving various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The key government institutions involved include the Ministry of Justice (General Directorate of Criminal Justice and Seal, Specialized Courts, Court of Appeal, Court of Cassation), Ministry of Economy, Finance and Development (Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financières (CENTIF), Direction Nationale du Trésor et de la Comptabilité Publique (DGTPC), Direction Generale des Impots (DGI); Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of External Affairs. Other institutions include the Ministry of Security (Directorate of Judicial Police, Gendarmerie and National Police Judiciary Police Units); Minister of Territory and National Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism Coordination Committee.

In 2015, the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) was established with the mandate to collect and analyze intelligence and other information considered relevant to the security of Burkina Faso. The ANR is the custodian of the National Information Plan validated by the National Intelligence Council to direct the Burkinabe intelligence community. The mandate of the ANR includes among other responsibilities, the coordination of relevant institutions responsible for internal and external intelligence necessary for counterterrorism including intelligence cooperation with partner countries. It also responds to the prosecutor's request for information relating to the collection of material evidence on matters relating to terrorism.

Counterterrorism Legislative Frameworks in Burkina Faso

In addition to the existence of various MDAs for combating terrorism, the government of Burkina Faso has enacted several laws as a legal framework for counterterrorism offensives. These laws include the following.

a. Law 016–2016/AN of 3 May 2016 on the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing (AML/CFT) in Burkina Faso;
b. Decree n 2016–465/PRES/PM/MINEFID of 3 May 2016;

c. Law 084–2015/CNT of 17 December 2015, amending Law No. 060/2009/AN of 17 December 2009, on the repression of acts of terrorism in Burkina Faso;
d. Organic Law No. 082–2015/CNT of 24 November 2015, on the attributions, composition, organization and functioning of the State Supreme Authority for the Control of State and the Fight against Corruption (ASCE-LC);
e. Law n 004–2015/CNT of 3 March 2015 on prevention and repression of corruption in Burkina Faso;
f. Decree 2012–1136/PRES/PM/MEF of 31 December 2012, appointing the competent administrative freezing authority.

In 2019, Burkina Faso adopted two decrees for the compensation of defense and security forces including public servants who are victims of terrorist attacks, with the objective of galvanizing public support in the fight against terrorism. The revised penal code of June 2016 criminalized the unauthorized dissemination of information about terrorist attacks and operations of defense and security forces, including making speeches or comments considered capable of demoralizing defense and security personnel.[47] It also mandated that any established violation of this revised penal code was made punishable by imprisonment of up to 10 years. The country's Constitutional Council declared the revised penal code constitutional in July 2019.[48] The direct consequence of ratification of the revised penal code was that media outlets became extremely cautious in directly reporting incidents of terrorism in the country, preferring instead to report official government releases. By August 2019, Burkina Faso's Special Investigation Unit (*Brigade Speciale des Investigations Antiterroristes, BSIAT*) reached operational capacity and facilitated the conclusion of 18 out of 31 existing cases and the arrest of 78 suspected terrorists.[49]

In the aftermath of the attack on the Semafo mining company convoy in November 2019, President Roch Kabore launched an appeal for volunteers to defend the country. The legal basis backing this appeal was enacted on 21 January 2020 with the passage of the law establishing the

[47] "Burkina Faso" Freedom House, accessed 27 January 2021, https://freedomhouse.org/country/burkina-faso/freedom-world/2020.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

Volunteer for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP) targeted at dealing with the multiple acts of terrorism in the country.[50] Under this law, the state arms local volunteers with weapons and provides two weeks of training to equip them to fight the al-Qaeda and IS-linked terrorists operating in the country.[51] The dangers with arming volunteers lies in the probability that it could exacerbate ethnic hostilities. Due to the inherent distrust between the Mossi Koglweogo self-defense group which has killed several Fulani militias over allegations of collaborating with jihadi groups, critics criticized the arrangement.[52]

The membership of Katiba Macina and Ansar ul-Islam pulls significant membership from ethnic Fulani. Corrine Dufka, Director of Human Rights Watch in the Sahel, notes that the inability of the Government of Burkina Faso to contain the excesses of security agencies has pushed 'scores, if not hundreds of young men into the hands of jihadists' and this is compounded by government policies that subcontract security responsibilities to extremely abusive militias such as the Koglweogo vigilante which is accused of human rights violations which sometimes acted in defiance of the state.[53]

On 29 May 2019, the Burkinabe parliament further enacted a law that approved a new criminal procedure that sought to abridge other criminal procedures relating to terrorism cases. This legislation specifically removed the requirement for an additional layer of investigations by the Court of Appeal and introduced the use of the Special Chamber to directly adjudicate cases of terrorism thereby reducing the pre-trial period. Furthermore, the Burkinabe parliament passed another bill submitted by the government to authorize the government to recruit volunteers to defend the homeland.

[50] Alban Kini, "Burkina Faso: Recruiting armed volunteers to tackle terrorism" Agence Presse Africaine News (APA), 29 January 2020; accessed 28 January 2021, www.apanew.net/en/news/burkina-faso-recruiting-armed-volunteers-to-tackle-terrorism.

[51] Sam Mednick, "In Burkina Faso, arming civilians to fight jihadists. What could go wrong?" *The New Humanitarian*, accessed 28 January 2021, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2020/03/09/burkina-faso-jihadists-vigilante-civilian-law.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Dufka cited in Tinti, "How Counterinsurgency Campaigns are fueling Human Rights Abuses in the Sahel" *World Politics Review*, Thursday, 30 April 2020; accessed 28 January 2021 https://www.worldpoliticreview.com/article.28724/in-mali-and-burkina-faso-human-rights-abuses-mar-counterinsurgency-campaigns.

Between 2014 and 2021, Burkina Faso detained over 400 persons, including persons below 16 years, on suspicion of terrorism-related offenses. The prosecution of the suspects initially could not be held prior to 2021 due to funding constraints. However, the administration of President Roch Kabore, acting through the Ministry of Justice, expedited trials to commence despite the constraints.[54] The prolonged detention of terrorism suspects without trial raised human rights issues. The maximum length of detention was 15 days in the first instance which could however be renewed for a period of 10 days if granted by the Tribunal de Grande Instance, that is, the High Court.[55] In such situations, the suspect has to be presented physically before the Judge, except where ongoing investigations suggest otherwise.

Burkina Faso further commits to efforts to counter terrorist radicalisation and recruitment. For example the government supports the Sahel Emergency Plan (Plan d'Urgence pour le Sahel; PUS) targeted at strengthening the role of government, enhancing community law enforcement and generating economic opportunities in its Sahel region while also engaging religious leaders on countering violent extremism.[56] The Government of Burkina Faso adopted the Emergency Plan for the Sahel in July 2017 to accelerate the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) in the northern parts of the country which were already weakened by extremist violence and associated insecurities.[57] This plan supports the access and provision of basic infrastructure such as portable water, health services and the mobilization of qualified personnel that will provide these services. Within the first six months of 2018, three ambulances were supplied and twenty-five new boreholes were drilled and equipped with Human Power Pumps

[54] Henry Wilkins, "Hundreds in Burkina Faso, including Minors, await trial on Terrorism Charges" *Voice of America*, 6 October 2021, accessed 18 November 2021 http://www.voanews.com/a/hundreds-in-burkina-faso-including-minors-await-trial-on-terrorism-charges-/6260162.html.

[55] United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner. "Experts of the Committee against Torture urge Burkina Faso to safeguard human rights while combating terrorism and insecurity" 14 November 2019, accessed 18 November 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25299&LangID=E.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Alliance Sahel, "Budgetary support for the Emergency Plan for the Sahel" https://www.alliance-sahel.org/en/projects/budgetary-support-for-the-emergency-plan-for-the-sahel-pus/ (accessed 22 March 2022).

(HMP) and while three simplified drinking water supply systems were provided.[58]

With respect to Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT), Burkina Faso is a member of the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa or GIABA, a FATF-style regional body. The country's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), known locally as the Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financières (CENTIF), is a member of the Egmont Group which is an informal network of FIUs dedicated to Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT). However, the Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) of the GIABA spell out, classified the vulnerability level of Burkina Faso to terrorist financing in 2019 as moderately high.[59]

In terms of international cooperation, Burkina Faso continues to partner with countries at the regional, continental and global levels to counter terrorism. Burkina Faso is a Troop Contributing Country (TCC) to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In September 2019, Burkina Faso hosted the extraordinary summit on counterterrorism by the ECOWAS and G5 Sahel Heads of State in its capital city of Ouagadougou. The Heads of States reaffirmed their commitment to the urgent need to prevent, detect and suppress the financing of terrorism in West Africa which is sustained by all forms of terrorism.[60] It has also held the rotational presidency of the G5 Sahel which is an initiative involving Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger established in 2017 to coordinate sub-regional responses to terrorism and related crimes in 2019.

In the aftermath of the September 2022 military coup in Burkina Faso, some diplomatic tensions erupted between Ouagadougou and Paris which culminated to the expulsion of French troops from the country within 30 days as contained in a diplomatic communication issued on

[58] Ibid.

[59] GIABA, Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism: Burkina Faso Mutual Evaluation Report, May 2019, 20.

[60] "Extraordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on Terrorism" Economic Community of West African States, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 14 September 2019, accessed 27 January 2021, https://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/UK-Final-Communique-Summit-on-Terrorism-14-Sept-in-Ouagadougou.pdf.

11 January 2023 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation in Ouagadougou.[61] This was followed by the deployment of armed civilians recruited and trained by the Government under the VDP scheme to support the counterterrorism operations of the Government. It remains unclear however how effective this innovation will be to the counterterrorism initiatives of the Government of Burkina Faso.

Challenges and Opportunities of Official Counterterrorism Response in Burkina Faso

Despite concerted efforts to combat terrorism as demonstrated by the introduction of basic legal and policy frameworks as well as institutions for combating terrorist financing, incidences of terrorism have continued to increase. This is because of the existence of a vulnerable population for recruitment, and the growing attractiveness of Burkina Faso to terrorist networks within and beyond its porous borders with Mali and Niger.

The effective implementation of Counter Financing of Terrorism (CFT) regimes is constrained by weaknesses relating to the control and sanctions for reporting entities such as financial institutions and Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) including charities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The subversion and manipulation of foreign exchange is a factor that could easily be exploited for terrorist financing, while the under-regulated cross-border movement of currency and ineffective control of the artisanal mining industry further sustains the terrorist financing. The implication is that the risk levels associated with real estate, transportation, non-profit organizations, restaurants and hotels including banks and money transfer agencies remain observably high in the country. These vulnerabilities are further worsened by the preponderance of cash exchanges that characterize the largely informal domestic economy.

The counterterrorism efforts in Burkina Faso are hampered by shortcomings in access to basic logistics for counterterrorism operations. For instance, the BSIAT is still handicapped by inadequate financing for

[61] Government of Burina Faso, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation No. 2023 -025/MAECRBE/CAB, Ouagadougou, 11 January 2023; Also see, *Ceylon Today* "Burkina Faso demands Departure of French Troops" News, Monday, 23 January 2023.

fuel, phone service and food for detainees under investigation.[62] It also encounters difficulties with access to credible information and intelligence from defense and security agencies especially the military. This has been attributed largely to inter-agency rivalries associated with whose mandate prevails in terrorism investigations and has persisted despite dialogue with joint military and gendarmerie units to facilitate access to military information.[63]

In addition, the official counterterrorism efforts in Burkina Faso have raised concerns over alleged human rights violations by personnel in the Burkina Faso defense and security forces. The Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that state security forces summarily executed 31 unarmed people at Djibo in April 2020 describing this incident as 'brutal mockery of a counterterrorism operation that may amount to a war crime.'[64] Such official responses are considered one of the factors fueling radicalisation and recruitment of civilians into terrorist groups.

Yet, with the recurrence of the unconstitutional change of government and ECOWAS imposition of sanctions on countries violating its protocols, counterterrorism engagements in Burkina Faso encountered new challenges and opportunities. First, the regime of sanctions mounted new pressures on the military leadership in the country as land borders with the coastal states of ECOWAS were shut thereby making movement of persons and goods import and export of commodities difficult. The far reaching implication is that the population came under new socio-economic difficulties that deepened the sufferings and insecurities associated with terrorism in the country.

On the political and diplomatic scene, the regional body set up motion to reactivate the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) for possible military offensive to restore constitutional order in recalcitrant member states under military rule beginning with Niger. A response which raised curiosity on the efficacy of the ECOWAS to tackling terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in the region as critics questions its failure to engage the ESF to assist the country to combat terrorist onslaughts by the JNIM and Islamic State within its territory; a situation that contributed to the advent of the military regime.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Human Right Watch cited in Peter Tinti, *Op. Cit*.

The eventual adoption of the Liptako-Gourma Accord and accompanying establishment of the L'Alliance des Etats du Sahel (AES) or Alliance of Sahel States (ASS) by Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger offers new opportunities to Burkina Faso's counterterrorism efforts. For instance, in December 2024, Malian troops leveraged on the AES protocol to penetrate into Burkina Faso territory beyond the 10 km threshold allowed in the G5 Sahel Joint Force, in pursuit of a convoy of terrorists operating on Mali's side of the Liptako-Gourma tri-border region killing 20 of the terrorist.

The Charter of Liptako-Gourma which established the AES as a security cooperation pact that will enable signatory states support one another, including militarily, if any is attacked. Article 2 of the Charter provides the prime objective of the AES as the establishment of an architecture for the collective defense and mutual assistance of the contracting parties.[65] From this, the contracting parties pledged commitment to effectively collaborate in preventing, managing and solving any armed rebellion or other threat to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each contracting party while giving priority to peaceful and diplomatic means including the use of force to deal with situations that threaten peace. The AES was later transformed into a Confederation on 6 July 2024 by the political leadership of the contracting states anchored on three Ds principles, namely Diplomacy, Defence and Development.[66]

As part of the gains of the Confederation of Sahel States, a convoy of terrorists operating in the Liptako-Gourma tri-border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger attacked parts of central Mali and fled toward Burkina Faso in December 2024. Leveraging on the AES charter, Malian troops pursued the terrorist into Burkina Faso territory beyond the 10 kilometers limit previously allowed in the G5-Sahel Joint Force and killed 20 of the terrorists. In addition to its membership of the ASS, the military leadership in Burkina Faso under Colonel Ibrahim Traore severed military and diplomatic links with France, in favor of a partnership with the Russia-backed Africa Corps (former Wagner Group), a Private Military Company (PMC) which has active involvement in counterterrorism efforts in the country. This is considered another opportunity for effective counterterrorism in Burkina Faso.

[65] Alliance of Sahel States, "Charter of the Liptako-Gourma Establish Alliance of Sahel States Between Burkina Faso, Republic of Mali and Republic of Niger", Bamako, 16 September 2023.

[66] Government of Mali, *Op. Cit.* 2024.

Conclusion

The dangers of terrorism in Burkina Faso are real and the Government continue to implement various counterterrorism measures through legal and policy interventions involving the whole of society and whole of government engagements. The Burkinabe government, also partners with immediate neighbors strategic partners in its counterterrorism efforts. However, despite official measures, terrorism remains an increasing security threat to Burkina Faso and its neighbors. However, despite official measures, terrorism remains the major national security threat in the country to the extent that Burkina Faso emerged the most terrorism impacted country in 2023 and 2024.[67] The threat of terrorism in the country is sustained by the activities of the Islamic State and the presence of Al Qaeda. In addition, transnational threats emanating from the neighboring Sahel which intensified after the violent overthrow of the Gaddafi regime in Libya have further contributed to sustain terrorism in the country as terrorist groups such as *Ansar ul-Islam* and al-Qaeda linked groups have since 2015 continued to attack educational institutions, defense and security assets and centers of economic activities including hotels and restaurants.

The task of combating terrorism and extremist violence in Burkina Faso therefore requires sustained and concerted efforts involving various stakeholder institutions drawn from the government and civil society for effective results. In other words, effective counterterrorism measures require a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response with adequate support from the international community. This calls for a more robust counterterrorism strategy and implementation plan for Burkina Faso.

Highlight of Terrorist Attacks in Burkina Faso Between 2019 and 2022

- Terrorist attack on Sunday worshippers at a Roman Catholic Church in Dablo on Sunday 12 May 2019 in which a priest and five other persons were killed.
- Audacious terrorist attack on Koudougou military outpost on Thursday 19 August 2019 resulting in the death of 24 Burkinabe soldiers and another 13 wounded. This incident marked the highest casualty in any singular terrorist attack against defense and security forces in Burkina Faso.

[67] Institute of Economics and Peace, *Op. Cit.*.

- Assassination of the Mayor of Djibo and a lawmaker of the Sahel region on Wednesday 3 November 2019. This was the highest level of political assassination in Burkina Faso since the terrorist assaults began.
- On Saturday 6 November 2019, terrorists attacked a convoy near the city of Fada N'gourma that was transporting a staff and contractors of Semafo, a Canadian mining firm traveling to the Boungou mine leading to the death of 37 civilians and causing injuries to 60 other persons.[68]
- On Saturday, 4 January 2020, a convoy of vehicles transporting students in the northwestern Sourou Province of Burkina Faso was attacked leading to the death of 14 persons including seven students while 19 others were injured.
- Suspected jihadists attacked Toéni military base, Sourou province in Boucle du Mouhoun region on Wednesday 1 April 2020. The incident led to the killing of a soldier while 15 jihadists were also killed.
- On Friday 3 April 2020, suspected terrorists detonated an explosive device on a military vehicle in the Toéni area resulting in the death of three soldiers.
- Suspected militants killed one police personnel near Kantchari, Tapoa province in the East region on Saturday 4 April 2020.
- Suspected JNIM militants attacked a military asset in Solle area, Loroum province, North region between 9 and 10 April 2020. Nineteen soldiers were killed in this incident.
- On Friday 7 August 2020, 25 people were killed in a terrorist attack in the Gourma province of Burkina Faso.
- Six members of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP) or *Volontaire pour la Défense de la Patrie* were killed and two others injured in Touldeni village, Burkina Faso following a terrorist attack on Thursday 24 September 2020. A counter attack by the VDP resulted in the killing of 20 of the terrorists.[69]

[68] Ian Austen, "Gunmen in Burkina Faso attack Canadian Mining Company Convoy, killing 37" *New York Times*, 6 November 2019, accessed 18 April 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/06/world/africa/burkina-mine-attack-canadian.html.

[69] African Union, "Africa Terrorism Bulletin", African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, December 2020, accessed 13 January 2021, https://caert.org.dz/all-activities/.

- On Thursday 24 September 2020, two security personnel were killed near Dissi village while on patrol along in the Tougan-Toeni area in Toeni Department, Sourou province, Boucle du Mouhoun region.
- Suspected terrorists ambushed a convoy transporting 46 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) near the town of Pissila in Sanmatenga province, Centre-north region on Saturday 4 October 2020 and killed 25 males after which they released the women and children.[70] The attackers declared that the attack was a retaliation for the presence of the VDF in the village.[71] The villagers were returning back to their villages.
- On Wednesday 14 October 2020, terrorists launched attacks on three villages namely Demniol, Bombofa and Peteguerse resulting in the death of 20 people.
- Armed militants ambushed and detonated IEDs on a military convoy along Tinakof-Beldiabe road in the northern province of Oudalan, Sahel region on Wednesday 12 November 2020 leading to the death of over 14 soldiers while eight others were wounded. This was the third terrorist attack in the Sahel and north-central Burkina Faso since the commencement of Burkina Faso's presidential and parliamentary elections campaign on the 31st October 2020.
- Fighters loyal to the Islamic State attacked a military base at Arbinda in the northern Soum province of Burkina Faso on Thursday 24 December 2020 using Vehicle-borne IED. This incident resulted in the death of seven soldiers while several others were injured.[72] The Burkinabe President, Rock Marc Kabore while declaring a two days national mourning, noted that 80 terrorists were neutralized by the Burkinabe soldiers during the attack to seize arms and ammunition,

[70] "UNHCR condemns killing of 25 internally displaced people in Burkina Faso" United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 7th October 2020, accessed 18th April 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/10/5f7d72a04/unhcr-condemns-killing-25-internally-displaced-people-burkina-faso.html.

[71] "Burkina Faso: Extremism and Terrorism" Counter Extremism Project, accessed 18th April 2021, https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/burkina-faso.

[72] "Islamic State group claims responsibility for Burkina Faso attack on military base", France24, Issued 27th December 2019, accessed 18 April 2021 https://www.france24.com/en/20191227-islamic-state-group-claims-responsibility-for-burkina-faso-attack-on-military-base.

but regretted that the terrorists killed 35 civilians of which 31 were women while fleeing.[73]

- About 100-armed terrorists invaded Loumbila village in northern Burkina Faso near the shared border with Mali on Monday 4 January 2021 and attacked a health center and local market where they carted away food stuff and motorbikes. The terrorists killed six persons including a member of the VDP.
- On Thursday 18 February 2021, several terrorists ambushed and attacked local traders between the towns of Markoye and Tokabangou in northern Burkina Faso killing eight and injuring nine of which one died later.[74] The traders were traveling to a local market at the border town of Dolbel in Niger Republic.
- Five persons were killed at Gaskinde town near the border with Mali when the ambulance conveying them was hit by a landmine allegedly planted by terrorists on Wednesday 3 March 2021. The victims included a pregnant woman, her husband, a girl and two other women.
- On Monday 5 April 2021, eight persons were killed at Tanwalbougou in Gourma province, eastern Burkina Faso following an attack by terrorists. The victims were three police personnel and five members of the VDF.
- On Friday 4 June 2021, approximately 132 civilians including seven children were killed by terrorists and another 40 persons were injured at Solhan village in Yagha province of Burkina Faso's northeast border areas with Niger Republic. This incident has been described as the worst attack in Burkina Faso and the Government declared a 72-hour period of national mourning.[75] The above captioned data were compiled by the author from different media reports.

[73] "Dozens killed in 'barbaric' militant attack in Burkina Faso" Deutsche Welle, accessed 18 April 2021, https://www.dw.com/en/dozens-killed-in-barbaric-militant-attack-in-burkina-faso/a-51790048.

[74] "Burkina Faso: Extremism and Terrorism" Counter Extremism Project, accessed 18th April 2021 https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/burkina-faso.

[75] "At least 132 civilians killed in Burkina Faso's worst attack in years" Reuters, 6 June 2021, accessed 14 June 2021 https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/armed-attackers-kill-100-civilians-burkina-faso-village-raid-2021-06-05/.

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CHAPTER 23

Cote d'Ivoire and Terrorism in a Delicate Neighbourhood

Fiifi Edu-Afful and Fafali Alai

Introduction

Côte d'Ivoire is a coastal state in West Africa with maritime boundaries in the Gulf of Guinea. It shares contiguous borders with Ghana to the East while Liberia and Guinea are the contiguous border in the West. In the north, Cote d'Ivoire shares borders with Mali and Burkina Faso. In terms of population, Cote d'Ivoire is characterised by 22,671,331 million people of ethnically diverse identities.[1] Despite the history of fraught division along ethnic, national, and religious lines, the former French colony experienced remarkable economic growth and political stability in the first

[1] Government of Côte d'Ivoire (2015). Fourth General Population Census. Available at www.ins.ci/n/#.

F. Edu-Afful (✉) · F. Alai
Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Accra, Ghana
e-mail: fiifi.edu-afful@kaiptc.org

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two decades after it gained independence in 1960.[2] Even though the country survived a civil war and accompanying threats to national stability and peace, particularly in the 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire eventually plunged into civil war in 2002. What started as a mutiny against the newly elected President Laurent Gbagbo resulted in the loss of lives, displacement of people, and destruction of property, as well as a wave of xenophobic attacks on foreigners? Although violence subsided in 2005 following the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Accord, the country remained divided with the southern part under the President Gbagbo's Government and controlled from Yamoussokro while the northern part was under rebel control and administered from Bouake under the leadership of Guillaume Soro.[3]

Born from a series of mediations initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) between Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro, the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement held in Burkina Faso on March 26, 2007 was more successful as it instated Laurent Gbagbo as the President and Guillaume Soroa as the Prime Minister. In a bid to elect a democratic leader in 2010, the country lapsed into its second civil war, which lasted for three months and resulted in the death of over 3,000 people.[4] The incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept the election results on the grounds that irregularities in the electioneering process appeared to have worked in favour of his opponent, Alassane Ouattara. Both politicians were sworn in as presidents and exercised their authority on the political divides based on ethnicity, along geographical lines. Laurent Gbagbo, backed by the army, controlled the South while Ouattara, with the support of rebels, controlled the North. However, following the defeat of government troops and capture of President Laurent Gbagbo in April 2011 by the rebel forces backed by France and the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Ouattara was made President. Eventually, situations were stabilised, and the country held peaceful democratic elections in 2015 resulting in the

[2] Badmus, I.A. (2009). Even the Stones are Burning: Explaining the Ethnic Dimensions of the Civil War in Cote d'Ivoire. *Journal of Social Science18* (1), pp: 45–57.

[3] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke "The African Union and the Challenges of Conflict Resolution in Africa: Reflections on Cote d'Ivoire" *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs,* Volume 33, Number 1, 2007, pp. 83–101.

[4] Ogwang, T. (2011). The root causes of the conflict in Ivory Coast. *AFRICA PORTAL a project of the Africa initiative*. No 5.

reinstatement of Alassane Ouatarra as the (current) President of Côte d'Ivoire.[5]

Côte d'Ivoire is located at the heart of West Africa and like most states within the sub-region, has porous borders. Despite the fact that Côte d'Ivoire has not suffered the same 'treacherous fate' of terrorism as its neighbouring countries (Mali and Burkina Faso), its geographical location and porous borders make the country a target for terrorist activities.[6] This chapter seeks to explore the existing internal factors which makes Côte d'Ivoire prone to terrorist activities by connecting the dots between the country's diverse demographic context, that is, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and the political history of the country.

Demographic Context of Cote d'Ivoire

The social structure of Côte d'Ivoire is complex due to ethnic, religious, national, and geographical fragmentations; it is imperative to understand these dynamics in order to make sense of the current situation. The 1998 census provides a comprehensive outlay of the various sects of Ivorian society. There are over 40 ethnic groups that can be categorised under five major socio-cultural groups, namely Akan, Krou, Northern Mandé, Southern Mandé, and Voltaic. The Akan constitutes the majority with approximately 42%[7] (Table 23.1).

On the basis of religious division, there are two major religions in Côte d'Ivoire—Islam and Christianity. While the Akan, Krou, and South Mandé are predominantly Christian, the Voltaic and Northern Mandé are Muslims[8] (Table 23.2).

Ethnicity and immigrants influence religious data in a complex society like Côte d'Ivoire. Although indigenous Ivorian tribes project an almost equal Muslim/Christian divide, over 70% of non-Ivorians are Muslim,

[5] Ogwang, T. (2011).

[6] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2020). UNODC Commits to supporting the Government of Côte d'Ivoire against transnational organised crime and terrorism. Available at https://www.unodc.org/west.

[7] Langer, A. (2010). Côte d'Ivoire's elusive quest for peace, Bath Papers in International Development and Wellbeing, No.11, University of Bath, Centre for Development Studies (CDS), University of Bath.

[8] Langer, A. (2010).

Table 23.1 Ethnic composition of the ivorian population in percentage (1975–1998)

Ethnic group/year	*1975*	*1988*	*1998*
Akan	42.5	41.8	42.1
Krou	15.9	14.6	12.7
Southern Mandé	12.0	10.7	10.0
Northern Mandé	13.6	15.9	16.5
Voltaic	15.4	16.3	17.6
Total	99.4%	99.3%	98.9%

Source Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (2001: p.68 as cited in Langer 2010)

Table 23.2 Religious affiliations by ethnicity in percentage as projected in the 1998 census

Religion	*Akan*	*Krou*	*North Mandé*	*South Mandé*	*Voltaic*
Christians	51.5	52.2	1.4	23.1	16.4
Muslims	5.0	2.6	95.6	5.6	44.7
Traditionalist	18.7	7.5	0.6	30.1	19.2
Without Religion	21.7	31.7	1.9	38.4	18.7

Source Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (2001: p. 67 as cited in Langer 2010)[9]

thereby sloping the religious margin in favour of Muslims at the national level[10] (Table 23.3).

The influx of foreigners from neighbouring African countries during the pre-colonial and post-colonial era has contributed to the current

Table 23.3 National religious composition percentage in the 1998 census

Religion	*Only Ivorian nationals*	*Including foreigners*
Christians	33.9	30.4
Muslims	27.5	38.6
Traditionalists	15.3	11.9
No religion	20.7	16.7

Source Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (2001: p.60 as cited in Langer 2010)

[9] The data projected here only consider Ivorian Nationals.

[10] Langer, A. (2010).

population dynamics of Côte d'Ivoire. Côte d'Ivoire's economy blossomed from the global sales of cocoa and coffee between 1960 and 1980. During this period, the country's annual GDP was 7%, which is similar to developed countries like Korea, Japan, and Brazil as at that time. There was high demand for labour at cocoa and coffee plantations mostly situated in the South. In order to retain labourers, including migrant labourers from Burkina Faso and their descendant, some of who were victims of forced labour under France colonial rule, Houphouët-Boigny introduced liberal immigration and land ownership laws that enabled immigrants to earn citizenship status and own properties. According to the 1998 census in Côte d'Ivoire, foreigners constitute 26.3% of Ivorians population.[11] Table 23.4 provides a clearer breakdown.

Geographically, Ivorians mostly associate this with the north–south divide. The Akan, Krou, and South Mandé are located in the forest zone or South, and the North Mandé and Voltaic are located in the North. The Southern region is predominantly populated by Christians while the Northern region is predominantly populated by Muslims. Having the major cities and processing companies as well as cocoa and coffee plantations, the south is the hub of economic activities. It is against this background that there is an incessant migration of people from the north to the south in search for greener pastures. This directly reflects the margin of Muslims residing in the south. Immigration undoubtedly also has an influence on the country's profile. A quarter of the total population is composed of foreign nationals while over 70% comprises of Muslims.

Table 23.4 Distribution of the foreign population by country of origin

Country	*1988 (Population %)*		*1998 (Population %)*	
Burkina Faso	1,564,650	51.5	2,238,548	56.0
Mali	711,135	23.4	792,258	19.8
Guinea	225,845	7.4	230,387	5.7
Ghana	167,783	5.5	133,221	3.3
Other countries	369,624	12.1	605,633	15.0
Total	3,039,037	100.0	4,000,047	100.0

Source Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (2001: p.71 as cited in Langer 2004)

[11] Akindes, F. (2004). The Roots of the Military Political Crises in Cote d'Ivoire. Research report No 128, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Uppsala.

Regions densely populated by immigrants are also located in the South or the forest zone. Based on these dynamics, we can conclude that the Ivorian society is divided along these lines; indigenous Ivorians and immigrants, northerners and southerners as well as Christians and Muslims. It is worth noting that the north–south divide does not tally with the conventional ethno-religious distribution of people.[12]

Political Trends in Cote d'Ivoire

Felix Houphouet-Boigny was president of Côte d'Ivoire from 1960 to 1993. His charismatic nature coupled with his leadership style of dialogue, peace, and ability to compromise earned him the title 'father of the nation.' To promote unity and representation of Côte d'Ivoire's various ethnic groups at the national level, Houphouet-Boigny introduced ethnic quotas in government institutions. Additionally, to bridge the northern-southern development gap, he introduced commercial food production in the north. He alternated national celebrations between the North and South to foster inclusion and harmony between the people. Boigny's policies ensured political and civil stability in Cote d' Ivoire at a time when most African states were struggling to find their feet after independence.

Boigny's pro-migration policies of the 1980s were heavily criticised as global prices of cocoa and coffee dropped. This resulted to lower standards of living and lack of jobs in the formal sector for Ivorians. His pro-migration policies of liberalism and land ownership, coupled with subsidies instead of taxation, secured immigrants working on cocoa and coffee plantations, while indigenous Ivorians struggled to secure jobs on these same plantations. Boigny transitioned Côte d'Ivoire from a one-party to a multi-party state and was elected as the first democratic leader in 1990. Politics of ethnicity and nationality began to raise its ugly head in the first democratic election in 1990. Laurent Gbagbo, the leader of the Ivorian Popular Front, accused Boigny of favouring his ethnic group and representing the interest of foreigners and northern ethnic groups. Following the death of Houphouet-Boigny in 1993, Henri Konan Bedié succeeded him.[13]

[12] Akindes, F. (2004).

[13] Crook, R.C. (1997). Winning Coalitions and Ethno- Regional Politics: The failure of the opposition in the 1990 and 1995 elections in Côte d'Ivoire. *African Affairs*, (96), 215–242.

Consequently, this led to the country's second multi-party election in 1995. Two major events preceded this election. In 1994, a new political party emerged, called the Rally of the Republican led by Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from the North. This party appealed to people of his descent and deepened ethno-religious differences at the national level. Prior to this, in 1993, President Bedié also adopted the policy of Ivorian nationalism known as 'Ivoirité' which states that anyone who takes up a political leadership role must be Ivorian by birth, with both parents also Ivorians by birth. Even though his government said the Ivoirité policy was to limit political participation to only Ivorian nationals, it was seen as an affront to Ouattara's political ambition as one of his parents is a Burkinabe. On these legal grounds, Ouattara declined to contest in the 1995 presidential election. Bedié won the elections due to the forfeit.[14]

Bedié continued to propagate politics of identity by removing northerners from government positions. Economic stagnation plagued his tenure leading to his military overthrow in 1999 by General Robert Gueï. The Gueï-led military government held an election six months after. Even though General Gueï condemned the Ivoirité policy, he disqualified Ouattara from contesting on the grounds he was not Ivorian. However, he allowed Laurent Gbagbo to run for the presidency. Although Gbagbo won the elections, Gueï declared himself as winner and dissolved the Electoral Commission. This made him unpopular and resulted in a revolt, causing him to flee from Côte d'Ivoire.[15] Laurent Gbagbo finally ascended to the presidential seat in 2001. His administration worsened the North–South divide as he excluded northerners from his government. This triggered an almost successful coup against him by some northern soldiers in 2001. Gbagbo was not discouraged from pursuing tribal politics after this incident. He further attempted to disband contingents in the Ivorian army that were recruited within the short period of Gueï's rule and replaced them with people loyal to him.

This agitated the northern soldiers in the army, and they mutinied against Gbagbo on 19 September 2002. Within a few weeks, politicians who were side-lined on the basis of ethnicity joined the rebels known

[14] Crook, R.C. (1997).

[15] Ibid.

as the New Forces to fight against the government.[16] After five years of unsuccessful attempts by international bodies to restore peace in Côte d'Ivoire, the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement was partially successful as it prepared the grounds for elections in 2010. Prior to the elections, Incumbent Laurent Gbagbo accused the Electoral Commission of inflating the register with non-Ivorians. This accusation was cleared by a verification exercise organised by the Electoral Commission; however, this did not make any significant change in the register. The 2010 elections also resulted in the second civil war in the history of Côte d'Ivoire. On the surface, these two conflicts can be attributed to post electoral disputes, yet it is obvious they were actually shrouded in the politics of identity based on ethnicity, religion, and the north–south divide.

Origin and Evolution of Terrorist Activities in Cote d'Ivoire

Even though Côte d'Ivoire does not have a local sect of any known terrorist group, the various divisions created by religion, ethnicity, nationality, and a dense population of Lebanese diaspora makes the country a fertile ground for terrorist activities. Laurent Gbagbo's ascension to the presidential seat in 2001, which began his ten-year administration, was backed by Christian ideology to legitimise his government. His religious zeal began when a Pentecostal prophet prophesied his winning in the 2001. This caused Gbagbo and his wife to leave their Catholic faith and cleave to the Pentecostals, keeping pastors and prophets close to the government as advisors.[17] Gbagbo and his forces used the gospel to legitimise political and military struggle by referring to the rebels and Northerners as the devil and his henchmen.[18] Again, Laurent Gbagbo was told by a Christian prophet that he was the chosen one by God for Côte d'Ivoire towards the 2010 elections. Churches and Christian bodies campaigned for Gbagbo on the basis that he is the Christian President while Ouattarra was the president of the foreigners and the Muslims. The

[16] Bah, A. B. (2010). Democracy and civil war: Citizenship and peace-making in Côte d'Ivoire. *African Affairs*, Vol 109(437), p. 597-615. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adq046.

[17] Vullers, J. (2011). Fighting for a kingdom of god? The role of religion in the Ivorian Crisis. GIGA Research Programme: Violence and Security. GIGA Working Paper.

[18] Vullers, J. (2011).

election results turned in favour of Ouattarra which sparked the second civil war. Yet, even while on trial for war crimes at the International Criminal Court (ICC), there existed a cross section of Ivorian Christians believe Gbagbo would return to rule the country as ordained by God.[19]

On the contrary, whereas Muslims were generally profiled as foreigners by the Gbagbo administration and some Ivorian Christians, the Muslim body within Côte d'Ivoire also had its own division of native Muslims and 'other' sects.[20] The country is predominantly Sunni[21] practising Muslims, the two major divisions are the Native or Dioula[22] Muslims and the Wahhabi[23] or Salafi.[24] The Dioula regard themselves as native Muslims because their practices are embedded in the socio-cultural adherents of the Northern Mandé people and other indigenous northern tribes. By virtue of trade, Dioula Muslims spread across the Southern Côte d'Ivoire converting native southern tribes and immigrants. It must be noted that these new converts suffered a dual level discrimination. On one hand, by virtue of their newfound faith, most of them had to adopt new lifestyles (dressing, food, switch occupation from fishing to trade in order to meet prayer times within the day). The process of becoming a Muslim convert as a Southerner was seen as alienation from one's' native society. Within the Muslim community, Southern Muslims were also marginalised and referred to as religious inferiors or Tuubijon, literally meaning 'the converted slaves.' Even though Muslim converts played significant roles

[19] Ibid.

[20] Guyon, M.M. (2016). Islam in and out: Cosmopolitan patriotism and xenophobia among Muslims in Côte d'Ivoire. *Africa* 86 (3), pp: 447–471. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972016000034.

[21] The largest Sect. (85%) of Muslims in the world today that believe in following the life examples of Prophet Mohammed. They also believe in the existence of a just Muslim community where leaders are selected based on their knowledge and piety. See (Blanchard, 2009).

[22] Dioula originally refers to a Mandé speaking trader from the North of Côte d'Ivoire but eventually, it became an umbrella name for Muslims in the Ivorian society. ibid.

[23] The most conservative form of Sunni Islam that aims at propagating Islamic fundamentals and building a caliphate ruled by Sharia Law across the world. It was started by Muhammed ibn Abd al- Wahhab in Saudi Arabia. It regards non- Wahhabi Muslims as dissident heretics. Saudi Arabia spreads Wahhabi ideologies across the world by establishing Wahhabi oriented mosques, schools, and Islam centres. ibid.

[24] The pious and glorious predecessors and ancestors of Islam. See Madore 2017.

in spreading Islam in the south, they were still referred to as religious inferiors by the Dioula Muslims.[25]

By the 1950s and 1960s, the converted Muslims in the south began to associate themselves with Wahhabism/Salafism; the purest form of Islam devoid of ethnic prejudice. This attracted most of the southerners who suffered varied forms of discrimination from the Dioulas and the state at large. The leaders of Wahhabism in Côte d'Ivoire were mostly Arab scholars who had returned from studies in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Islamic countries. They sought to augment the secondary status of Muslims in general by setting up modern education systems and the formation of Muslim superstructures such as The National Islam Council (CNI), the High Court of Imams (COSIM), and then the Association of Sunni Muslims of Côte d'Ivoire (AMSCI).[26] Subsequently, tensions over practices such as wearing of veils, naming mosques, the crossing of arms while praying, and deciding who should head the CNI and COSIM sparked tensions among the Dioulas and the Wahhabi/Salafi. The Dioula-Wahhabi divide over the years widened the Islamic spectrum in Côte d'Ivoire. Other Islamic sects notably Ahmadiyya, Tablighi Jamaat[27] and Sufi sects have also established themselves in Ivorian society. Even though these Muslim sects promote their ideologies through social and cultural activities, their practices, ideologies, and incessant preaching raises suspicion. For instance, the Tablighi Jamaat is known for propagating radical Islamic ideologies which have caused unrest in other countries within the sub-region.[28]

Another dimension to be considered when looking at the possible origin and development of terrorism in Côte d'Ivoire is the presence of Lebanese. With a population of almost 100,000, Côte d'Ivoire is home to the largest Lebanese diaspora in Africa and the fourth highest in the

[25] Guyon, M.M. (2012). 'Native' Conversion to Islam in Southern Côte d'Ivoire: The perils of double identity. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 42(2), pp: 95–117.

[26] Madore, F. (2016). The New Vitality of Salafism in Cote d'Ivoire: Toward a Radicalisation of Ivorian Islam? *Journal of Religion in Africa 46* (4), pp: 417–452.

[27] An Islamic revival movement that aims to encourage Muslims to return to the ways of Prophet Muhammed an ideal life form. They operate by visiting Muslims in their localities and invite them towards practical Islam. See Ali (2003).

[28] Madore, F. (2016).

world. Over 80% of Lebanese in Côte d'Ivoire are Shiite.[29] These people originate from southern Lebanon, an area of low economic development that brought to the fore Hezbollah in 1984.[30] The Lebanese community in Côte d'Ivoire controls about 50% of the Ivorian economy- they own over 4,000 companies that employ over 300,000 people. Their economic activities contribute to 15% of Côte d'Ivoire's tax revenue. Worldwide, the Lebanese diaspora is known to have control in the local politics of Lebanon and the case is not different in Côte d'Ivoire. Lebanese associations in Côte d'Ivoire are known to be aligned with Al-Barr War Taawon, which represents the Lebanese Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri Amal's movement, and Al-hoda, the movement of highly revered religious leader, the late Sayyed Mohammed Hussein Fadallah.[31]

The Al-Ghadir Association is the largest Lebanese association in Côte d'Ivoire, where the Shiite constitute over 93% of its members. The group is often perceived as Hezbollah's representation in Côte d'Ivoire, although its leaders deny it due to the terrorist label that comes with it. Instead, they describe it as a force of solidarity among members of the Lebanese community as well as between Lebanese and Ivorians. A study among Lebanese in Côte d'Ivoire revealed that a large number of the population consider the Hezbollah as a national resistance movement than a terrorist organisation. Herein, we can deduce that many of the Lebanese diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire support the activities of Hezbollah and may demonstrate this support by funding their activities and providing membership when needed.[32]

[29] A Muslim minority worldwide (10-15%) but form the majority in Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, and Azerbaijan. They hold the belief that Muslim leadership should be from Prophet Mohammed's bloodline. Shiites give human beings an exalted status given to Prophets in the Quran. See Ali 2003.

[30] Hezbollah is a Shiite military and political group that emerged in Lebanon in 1982 when Israel invaded the country. It aims to destroy Israel and expel Western influence from the Middle East at large. What started as a militant group has metamorphosed to a political party that influence domestic politics, provide social services, and launch terrorist attacks and regional military attacks. See Norton 2007; Also see Assanvo, W. (2015). Is Côte d'Ivoire facing Religious Radicalism? *Institute for Security Studies*, 13 available at https://media.africaportal.org

[31] Ibid.

[32] Assanvo, W. (2015).

There is no single cause for terrorist activities but rather a culmination of diverse causes which are driven by social, economic, and political deprivation, coupled with discrimination in a dysfunctional state galvanised by a unifying idea such as religious fundamentalism.[33] Côte d'Ivoire has had its share of civil unrest that makes its security fragile, a society that is fragmented along religious, ethnic, and national lines as well as budding religious and radical ideologies which makes the country a fertile ground for internal and external terrorist activities.

Evolving Threats Landscape in Cote d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire's active participation in counter-terrorism initiatives has made it a target for Jihadist groups operating in neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso. On 13th March 2016, three gunmen embarked on an indiscriminate shooting in a beach resort at Grand Bassam, a town situated 25 miles away from Abidjan. This attack targeted residents of the L'étoile du Sud and Hotel Nouvelle Paillote, hosting mostly foreign nationals. The attack resulted in the deaths of 16 civilians, 3 Ivorian soldiers, and 24 injured persons. The 16 civilians comprised 8 Ivorians, 4 French, a German, a Lebanese, a Nigerian, and a Macedonian.[34] Al-Qaeda in the Islamist Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for this attack on Côte d'Ivoire. According to AQIM, this attack was intended to send home three messages.[35]

Firstly, to strong-arm the Sahel G5 states (Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali) to impede anti-terrorist operations launched against Islamic militants operating in the Sahel. Secondly, to take revenge on Côte d'Ivoire for the handover of terrorist captives to Mali and also for serving as a permanent base for the French military, thereby aiding their undertaking of a counter insurgency operation in the region. Lastly, to serve as a warning to the Western world, particularly France, to desist from their anti-terrorist operations, especially Operation Barkhane

[33] Mair, F. (2010). Terrorism and Africa. *African Security Studies* 12 (1), pp: 107-110. https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2003.9627576.

[34] Gunaratna, R. (2016). Ivory Coast Attack: Africa's Terror Footprint Expands. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, Vol 8 (6). Pp 14-18.

[35] Ibid.

in Mali. AQIM refers to France as 'Crusaders' and the Sahel G5 as a satanic coalition.[36] The press release from AQIM after the attack states:

> [We] remind you each time that the security in the world is a total and indivisible matter: either you leave us safe in our lands, or we will destroy your security and the security of your citizens, the same as you destroy our security, know that the time of occupying our lands and looting our fortunes are without [consequence] has gone without return (SITE Intelligence Group as sited by Gunaratna 2016 p. 15)

The three gunmen were identified as Hamza al- Fulani, Abu Adam al-Ansari, and Abdul Rahman al- Fulani. The first two were reportedly associated with Al-Murabitoum, an Al-Qaeda affiliated militant group based in northern Mali, and the other a member of the AQIM's branch in the Sahara.[37] Following the attack on Grand Bassam, Ivorian Security Forces arrested over 80 people (most of whom were foreigners) in connection with the attack. The Ivorian Government also allocated 80 billion CFA Francs to reinforce security institutions in the fight against terrorism.[38]

Again, on 11 June 2020, another terrorist attack was launched near Kafolo, a border post near Burkina Faso. This attack claimed the lives of 12 Ivorian military men and left 8 wounded. Even though the source of this attack is not known, security analysts assess it as a reprisal attack on Côte d'Ivoire for its joint counterterrorism operation with Burkina Faso around the Comoé National Park, a reserve located close to Côte d'Ivoire's border and Burkina Faso.[39] Operation Comoé was carried out in mid-May around the north-east of the city of Ferkessédougou, Côte d'Ivoire, and the south of Banfora, Burkina Faso. The operation led to the death of 8 suspected Jihadists, the capture of 38 others, and the destruction of a terrorist cell associated with the al-Qaeda—aligned

[36] Ibid.

[37] Counter Extremism Project (2020) Côte d'Ivoire: Extremism and Counter-Extremism. Retrieved from https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/cote-d-ivoire.

[38] Ibid.

[39] France24 (2020, June 11). Ivory Coast Soldiers killed in attack at border post near Burkina Faso. Available at https://www.france24.com/en/20200611-ivory-coast-soldiers-killed-in-attack-at-border-post-near-burkin-faso.

Macina Liberation Front (MLF), a part of the Jamaat Nasral-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) militant coalition.

While the jihadist base was in Burkina Faso, some of its members lived in Côte d'Ivoire.[40] It is also reported that the jihadist cell was strategically located in the north-east city of Ferkessedougou in order to mobilise people in Northern Côte d'Ivoire for the MLF. This would be made possible by exploiting the ethno-political and religious grievances within communities who may feel alienated from the state. This is the strategy used by Al-Qaeda to establish its foothold in the Liptako-Gourma zone of the Sahel. The Liptako-Gourma zone is the tri-border region of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, which serves as the hub of terrorist activities in the Sahel Region.[41]

Al- Qaeda issued a statement on 28th May 2020 warning the Ivorian government on retributive acts of violence it welcomes as a result of its collaborative effort with the Burkinabe government to oust their cells around Comoé National Park. The statement further explains that Côte d'Ivoire remains a prime target for Al-Qaeda's sporadic attacks because of its proximity to countries like Mali and Burkina Faso where Al-Qaeda has established epicentre. Côte d'Ivoire has actively merged with regional and international bodies to fight terrorism in the Sahel. In 2015, the country joined the coalition of Muslim nations to fight Islamic extremism. Again, Côte d'Ivoire serves as a permanent logistical base for French counterterrorist troops in the Sahel. The country also willingly partnered with France to launch the first ever counterterrorism academy, International Counter Terrorism Academy, to train counterterrorism professionals in the region.[42]

On one hand, terrorist attacks have been linked to foreigners and terrorist groups (AQIM, Al- Mauribitoun, Ansar Dine all based in Mali) operating close to its borders, especially in the north. As a result, the

[40] Jeuneafrique (2020, June 10). Burkina Faso –Ivory Coast: the secrets of the anti-terrorist operation "Comoe". Available at https://www.jeuneafrique.com/998211/politique/Burkina-faso-cote-divoire-les-secrets-de-loperation-antiterroriste/.

[41] Assanvo, W., Dakono, B., Theroux-Benoni, L. A. & Maiga, I. (2019). Violent Extremism, organised crime, and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma. *Institute for Security Studies* Available at https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/war-26-eng-pdf.

[42] Cummings, R. (2020). Côte d'Ivoire, Prioritizing Counterterrorism, Now Facing Terror threat. The Global Observatory, Available at https://theglobalobservatory.org/2020/07/cote-divoire-prioritizing-counterterrorism-faces-terror-threat/.

Ivorian government has introduced biometric identification for those entering the country and strengthened border posts.[43] It has also reported that some Ivorians have gone to join Shiite fighters in Syria and Lebanon.[44]

Official Responses to Terrorism in Côte d'Ivoire

Exactly a month after the attack on Côte d'Ivoire's shared border with Burkina Faso, the Ivorian government launched the Northern Operational Zone as another measure to strengthen its domestic strategies to protect its territories from terrorist infiltration. With the Northern Operational Zone, the Ivorian Security forces assume a more defensive position to reverse and launch attacks on suspected jihadist activities close to its borders.[45] Within the same period, the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) Regional Counter Terrorism Node for Western and Central Africa (RCTN WCAF) trained the INTERPOL National Central Bureau officers alongside the forensic and penitentiary officers on using biometric data collection equipment. This method of data collection was used to gather the biometric data of 37 of the suspected terrorists and has been added to INTERPOL's global pool of intelligence.[46] Prior to this attack, domestic strategies to fight terrorism were mostly legislations that prevented foreign Imams from preaching in the north, allowing law enforcers to tap phone lines and conduct counterterrorism searches and detain suspected terrorists for up to 96 hours. Individuals convicted on terrorist-related charges face a 10 to 20 years prison sentence and also a fine of between 5 to 50 million CFA Francs. The 2 Ivorian soldiers who were arrested in connection with the attack on

[43] Rfi (2015, July 5). Côte d'Ivoire: new anti-terrorism law raises fears of abuse Available at https:/www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20150705-cote-ivoire-nouvelle-loi-antiterroriste-craindre-derives-liberticides-prison.

[44] OSAC (2018). Côte d'Ivoire 2018 Crime and Safety report. Available at https://www.osac.gov/.

[45] Agence de Presse Africaine (2020, July 13). Côte d'Ivoire launches "Operational Zone" to fight terrorism. Available at apanews.net/en/news/cote-divoire-launches-operational-zone-to-fight-terrorism.

[46] INTERPOL (2020, July 27). INTERPOL assisting Cote d'Ivoire identify terrorists arrested after attack. Available at INTERPOL assisting Côte d'Ivoire identify terrorists arrested after attacks.

Grand Bassam for conspiracy with terrorists were sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and fined 200,000 Francs.[47]

Contextual Analysis of Terrorism in Cote d'Ivoire

A multiethnic, multi religious country like Côte d'Ivoire remains a good bait for terrorism because of longstanding horizontal inequalities among its ethnic groups. Horizontal inequalities are explained as structural inequalities along social, political, economic, and cultural status between coexisting culturally defined groups.[48] Ivorian society is structured along deep rooted discrimination and inequality between distinct national, religious, and ethnic groups. The discrepancy of natural resources between the North and the South exacerbates this inequality. It is not surprising that development projects are concentrated in the south while the north continues to lag behind.

In search of greener pastures, northerners migrated and settled in the south. Here, their practice of Islam is at odds with the values of the Christian population. Southerners who converted to Islam were also regarded as inferior to native northern Muslims and were alienated from their southern culture, this led most southern converts to embrace Wahhabism. The north–south divide was projected in national politics after the adoption of democracy and multi-party system in the 1990s. The southern-dominated government adopted policies that were targeted at depriving northerners (including migrants who have gained Ivorian citizenship status) of political participation. Politicians exploited existing ethnic and religious segregation between the north and south to amass support and consolidate political power. The two civil conflicts in the history of Côte d'Ivoire were fuelled by politics of ethnic and religious identity between the north and south.[49]

[47] Rfi (2015, July 5). Côte d'Ivoire: New Anti-Terrorism Law Raises Fears of Abuse. Available at https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20150705-cote-ivoire-nouvelle-loi-antiterroriste-craindre-derives-liberticides-prison.

[48] Stewart, F. (2008). Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and some Hypotheses. Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict, pp 3-24. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230582729_1.

[49] Langer, A., Mustapha, A.R. & Stewart, F. (2007). Horizontal Inequalities in Nigeria, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire: Issues and Policies. Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) Working Paper No. 45. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk.

Terrorist activities thrive on two root causes; permissive structural factors that create an enabling environment for them to operate, and underlying grievances that present substantial political issues. These factors include poverty, underdevelopment, urbanisation, social alienation, and a clash of religion and ideology.[50] The Ivorian society is already demarcated along socio-economic, cultural, and religious lines making it easy for terrorists to infiltrate. Post-conflict Cote d'Ivoire is faced with distrust between political actors, entrenched salience of ethno-religious identities, and low levels of economic growth leaving a vacuum for authority and a source of support for terrorism. Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) is known to exploit these situations in countries it has established hubs including Mali which borders Cote d'Ivoire to the north.[51]

Conclusion

Côte d'Ivoire's borders are continually threatened by terrorist activities because of its geographical location and position on combating terrorism in West Africa. Much of the foreseeable threats of terrorism stem from internal and external dynamics of horizontal inequalities in ethnicity, economic development, and religion. Additionally, the scourge of the 2002 and 2010 civil conflicts has exposed the cracks in society and intensified mistrust between various social groupings. Finally, the rejuvenation of Salafism and other extremist Islamic sects in the past years together with the dense population of Lebanese Shiite in Côte d'Ivoire and their support for Hezbollah makes the country a major target for terrorists to establish local cells in the country. Côte d'Ivoire must therefore strengthen its security apparatus to protect the state from terrorist invasion.

[50] Newman, E. (2006). Exploring the ''Root Causes" of Terrorism. Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 29(8), https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100704069.

[51] Conkar, A. (2020). Development and Security Challenges in the Sahel Region. Draft Report. Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM).

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CHAPTER 24

Domestic and Transnational Terrorism in the Sahel: Case of Mali

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke

Mali's tragedy dates back to the allegiance to Al-Qaeda of the Salafist Group for Predication and Combat, the Algerian GSPC, on September 11, 2006, exacerbated by NATO's hazardous military intervention in Libya in 2011.
—Abdoulaye Maiga[1]

[1] Republic of Mali, Address by Colonel Abdoulaye MAIGA, Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Spokesperson for the Government of the Republic of Mali, at the General Debate of the 79th ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York, September 28, 2024.

C. N.-E. Okereke (✉)
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: emekaokereke@gmail.com; emekaokereke@ndc.gov.ng

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Introduction

Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa with a total area of 1,240,142 square kilometres of which the land is 1,220,190 sq km.[2] The country is located on geographical coordinates of 17′00N and 4′00W in West Africa's Sahelo-Saharan belt and links West and North Africa. Mali shares a total of 7,908 km of international boundaries with seven African countries drawn as follows; with Algeria (855 miles), Burkina Faso (621 miles), Cote d'Ivoire (330 miles), Republic of Guinea (533 miles), Mauritania (1,390 miles), Niger (510 miles) and Senegal (260 miles).[3]

The Central Intelligence Agency projects that by July 2021, the population of Mali will be 20,137,527.[4] The ethnic composition of the population in percentages as at 2018 is as follows; Bambara 33.3%, Fulani (Peuhl) 13.3%, Sarakole/Soninke/Marka 9.8%, Senufo/Manianka 9.6%, Malinke 8.8%, Dogon 8.7%, Sonrai 5.9%, Bobo 2.1%, Tuareg/Bella 1.7% and other Malian 6%, from members of Economic Community of West Africa 0.4%, while others are put at 0.3%.[5] It is important to note that the harmonious relations that previously existed among the various ethnic groups in Mali are increasingly being threatened by the scourge of terrorism and inter-groups rivalries.

Politically, Mali attained political independence from France on 22 September 1960. The country's capital city is Bamako, which means crocodile tail or crocodile river in the native Bambara language. Administratively, Mali has 10 regions: District de Bamako, Gao, Kayes, Kidal, Koulikoro, Menaka, Mopti, Segou, Taoudenni and Timbuktu. In terms of mineral resources, Mali has significant deposits of gold, phosphate, kaolin, salt, limestone, uranium, gypsum, granite and note.

This chapter examines the incidence of terrorism in Mali since the Arab Spring and the rise of the Daesh. It further reflects on the counterterrorism engagements of the Government of Mali acting alone and in collaboration with regional and extra-regional partners.

[2] "Mali" Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook, accessed 23 March 2021, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/Mali/.

[3] "Which Countries Border Mali" World Atlas, accessed 24 April 2021, https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-countries-border-mali.html.

[4] CIA, Op. Cit.

[5] Ibid.

History of Rebellion and Terrorism in Mali

Like other countries in the Sahel, Mali is not immune to acts of terrorism and remains one of the most threatened countries in West Africa. This is not unconnected to the fact that a vast expanse of its territory remains largely under-populated and under-governed. Internally, Mali has a long history that is sometimes intertwined with the Tuareg insurgency dating back to the immediate post-independence decade. The historical grievances associated with the Tuareg question in Mali escalated in the wake of the Arab Spring in Libya and has so far deepened the mutual distrust that characterised north-south relations within the country.

The Tuareg population is of the Berber ethnic group that inhabit a large area in the middle and Western Sahara including the north-central Sahel especially in Algeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Libya.[6] The Tuareg have been engaged in secessionist struggle for an independent state of Azawad for Tuareg population spread across southern Algeria, northern Mali and western Niger since the 1960s. In Libya, the Arab Spring gave renewed impetus for Tuareg irredentism and since 2012, Mali was hit by another wave of Tuareg separatist struggle which was exploited by the Al-Qaeda Network to pursue its objectives in the region.[7] The Government of Mali however signed the Algiers Peace Agreement with Tuareg leaders to end the Tuareg rebellion but the administration of deposed President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was unable to fully implement the Algiers agreement prior to his overthrow by military officers in August 2020.[8] The overthrow of the Keita administration was therefore welcomed by Tuareg leaders who reached out to the Goita regime in support.

Mali's neighbours, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Republic of Niger also have an established history of terrorist attacks. These countries have a history of terrorism and much of their shared border areas

[6] New World Encyclopedia, "Tuareg" accessed 20 November 2021, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Tuareg.

[7] Global Security, "Tiareg-Mali" accessed 20 November 2021, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tuareg-mali.htm.

[8] Ibid.

are largely under-patrolled. A vast portion of Mali remains uninhabited and under-government, providing the opportunity for illicit weapon trafficking by terrorist groups.[9]

Mali has experienced four rebellions by Tuareg groups since independence. The first rebellion led by Zeyd ag Attaher and Elledi ag All lasted from May 1963 until August 1964. The second rebellion began in March 1990 and ended following the signing of the Tamanrasset Agreement in January 1991 and a National Pact in April 1992 which provided for a strong decentralisation and devolution of power and resources to local authorities.[10] Between 2006 and 2009, Mali witnessed two separate rebellions by the Tuareg. Leveraging on the withdrawal of Malian forces in line with the Algerian Peace Agreement reached in July 2006, Iyad ag Ghalli rebelled against Bamako and occupied the territory between Kidal and Menaka in northern Mali. Subsequently, ag Bahanga and other Tuareg leaders rebelled against attempts by former President Ahmoudou Traore to project Iyad ag Ghali's leadership in northern Mali until he fled to Libya in 2009.[11] It has been suggested that the reduced presence of Malian military and security forces in northern Mali was exploited by the Algerian-based Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) which crossed the borders and established sanctuary in the border area of northern Mali to avert intensified Algerian counterterrorism offensives. The GSPC later mutated to the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) which financed its terrorist activities through illicit transnational trafficking in the Sahel. Examples of transnational criminal dealings perpetrated by the AQIM include:

a. A botched attempt at smuggling arms between Mali and Algeria on 23rd January 2004 involving six Malian and one Mauritanian members of the AQIM.
b. The kidnapping of two Austrian tourists in Tunisia that were held hostage in northern Mali in March 2008.

[9] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Countering violent extremism and insurgency in the wake of Arab spring: Peace Support Operations in Mali in Perspective" *African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism*, Vol. 7, No. 1, June 2018, 70.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

c. The murder of Edwin Dyer, a Briton kidnapped from Niger in February 2009 and held hostage in northern Mali till June 2009 when he was killed.
d. The killing of Lieutenant Colonel Lamana Ould Cheikh of Malian military intelligence at Timbuktu in June 2009.[12]

The above incidents were the precursor to Mali's eventual degeneration to a country of concern for terrorism analysis as demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

Overview of Terrorism in Mali Since the Arab Spring

Since the Arab Spring in Libya, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) for Mali steadily increased in severity from an index of 5.29 in 2014 to 7.05 in 2020.[13] By the year 2020, the Global Terrorism Index for Mali was 7.05 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.[14] Statistics from the Institute of Economics and Peace ranked that the impact of terrorism on Mali as 22nd in the GTI for 2018.[15] This ranking worsened in 2019 as Mali emerged 13th position out of 138 countries ranked in the world.[16]

Nna-Emeka Okereke, a regional security expert at the National Defence College in Abuja traces the escalation of terrorism in Mali to the violent collapse of the Ghadaffi regime in the wake of the Arab Spring in Libya and the accompanying flight of the Tuareg members of Ghadaffi's military. These Tuareg fighters left Libya and returned to Mali with arms and ammunition stolen from the Libyan armoury. They also had combat

[12] Ibid.

[13] "Mali – Global Terrorism Index" World Data Atlas, accessed 23 March 2021, https://knoema.com/atlas/Mali/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-terrorism-index.

[14] Ibid.

[15] "Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism" Institute of Economic and Peace, accessed 23 March 2021, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global-Terrorism-Index-2018-1.pdf.

[16] "Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism" Institute of Economic and Peace, accessed 23 March 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2019.

experience working for Khadafy with which they used it to renew an irredentist struggle in 2012 for the independence of the State of Azawad for Tuaregs. Azawad's territory cuts across parts of northern Mali, western Niger, southern Algeria and parts of Libya.[17]

The initial attempts at counter insurgency by Malian troops against the Tuareg rebellion in the northern territories was frustrated by combat losses as the Tuareg fighters captured towns like Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao. This was accompanied by withdrawal of Malian troops, increased abductions, recruitment and radicalisation of vulnerable populations. In March 2012, nearly 100 Malian soldiers were killed by the MNLA rebels: concerns about the Government of Ahmadou Toure's ability to contain the Tuareg rebellion resulted in the overthrow of his administration in March 2012 by young military officers.[18] The defeat of Malian forces in the Tuareg dominated northern territories was accompanied by the withdrawal of troops which created a vacuum that was exploited by extremists and enabled them to consolidate their territorial gains and proselytise their radical ideology in the affected areas.[19]

The major non-state armed groups (NSAGs) that existed in Mali at this period of Tuareg rebellion were identified by Okereke to include Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb, Harakat Ansar ul Dine, Islamic Movement of Azawad, Al-Mouwakoune Bi-Dima, Movement for Tawhid (Unity) and Jihad in West Africa and the Al-Mourabitoun. These are tacitly discussed below.

Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb

The Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) emerged in 2007 when the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) changed its name following its affiliation with the North African cell of the Al-Qaeda Network. The AQIM projected itself as committed to the spread of the Salafist brand of Islam beyond North Africa to Mali and the Sahel. It sustained its activities in West Africa through kidnapping for ransom, collection of *rite de passage* (protection fees) and other illicit transnational

[17] Okereke, Op. Cit., 79.

[18] Project Ploughshare, "Mali (2012 - First Combat Deaths)" accessed 20 November 2021, https://ploughshares.ca/pl_armedconflict/mali-2012-first-combat-deaths/.

[19] Ibid.

trafficking across the Sahel.[20] In the wake of the Malian political turmoil, the AQIM pledged support to Iyad ag Ghali's Ansar al Dine and other extremist pro-Islamic groups in the country.

Harakat Ansar ul Dine

The Harakat Ansar al Dine (Movement of Defenders of the Faith) led by Iyad ag Ghali was established in December 2011 and comprised largely of former pro-Gaddafi fighters from Libya. The Ansar ul Dine initially collaborated with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) until the capture of Timbuktu in June 2012 when it declared its mission as the pursuit of an Islamic theocracy in Azawad contrary to MNLA goal of secular state.

Islamic Movement of Azawad

The Islamic Movement of Azawad (IMA) was formed in January 2013 as a political movement committed to the independence of Azawad. Its members broke out from Iyad ag Ghali's Ansar ul Dine and entered an alliance with the MNLA. Armed largely with Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), the IMA under the leadership of Alghabass ag Intalla operated mostly in Kidal and Meneka regions but expressed commitment to dialogue and negotiations.

Al-Mouwakoune Bi-Dima

Al-Mouwakoune Bi-Dima also known as Signers in Blood Battalion (SBB) or Signatories for Blood is a breakaway faction from the AQIM. Other descriptions of SBB include Al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam and We Sign with Blood, among others. This group was led by Moktar Belmoktar and its membership comprised largely of persons that advocate the enforcement of Sharia law in Mali. In January 2013, the SBB orchestrated the Amenan hostage incident in eastern Algeria at the heavily guarded oil and gas facility run by British Petroleum, Norwegian Statoil and Algerian state

[20] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb and Question of Security in West Africa" *African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism*, Volume 1, Number 1, June 2010.

hydrocarbons giant, Sonatrach in retaliation for French military operation in Mali which disrupted the terrorist group's objectives.[21]

Movement for Tawhid and Jihad in West Africa

The Movement for Tawhid (Unity) and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) otherwise known as the Mouvement pour l'Unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (in French) emerged in 2011 under the leadership of a Mauritanian national named Ahmed Ould Amer with nom de guerre as Ahmed Telmissi or Tilemsi as a breakaway group of the AQIM.[22] The MUJAO seeks, among others, the spread of radical Islam across West Africa and therefore joined an alliance with the Ansar ul Dine to fight against secular separatists seeking an independent State for the Tuareg nation. The MUJAO's sphere of activities was largely concentrated in and around Douentza, Gao and Kidal in northeastern Mali. The Emir of the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Islamic Emirate of Gao, Abu al Wahid al Sahrawi vowed to target any neighbouring country that disrupts the growing activities of extremist groups in Mali.[23] In October 2011, the MUJAO abducted three European aid workers at Tindouf camp in Algeria run by Saharawis of the Polisario Movement. However, the hostages were later released them in July 2012 in exchange for three Islamists held in Mauritania and also collected ransom payment of $18.4 million.[24] The MUJAO also claimed responsibility for the kidnap of seven Algerian diplomats in Gao on 5th April 2012.[25] In September 2012, the MUJAO executed the Algerian Vice-Consul, Taher Touati who was kidnapped in Mali. Yet, it blamed the Algerian Government

[21] Okereke, 2018, Op.cit, 84.

[22] "Profile Al-Mourabioun" BBC News, 16 January 2016, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34881170.

[23] Bill Roggio, in "West African Jihadist Group forms four Battalions, names three after Al Qaeda Leaders" *The Long War Journal*, 9 January 2013, accessed Sunday 28 March 2013, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/01/west_african_jihadis.php#ixzz2R535bMck.

[24] "Mouvement pour l'Unification et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest" Stanford University, Centre for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), accessed 28 March 2021, https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/mujao.

[25] "Mali Islamist group kills Algerian Diplomat" Al Jazeera News, accessed 28 March 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/9/2/mali-islamist-group-kills-algerian-diplomat.

for the killing in the following words, "the Algerian government must take complete responsibility for the consequences of its stubbornness and the misguided and irresponsible decisions of its president and its generals"[26] The MUJAO had earlier released three hostages in July 2012 and had issued an ultimatum to the Algerian Government on 24th August in which it threatened to kill the remaining hostages after Algiers rejected the demand for prisoner swap.[27] It was because of MUJAO's increased activities in Mali and neighbouring countries that the United States Government listed the MUJAO as a Foreign-Based Terrorist Organisation (FBTO) in December 2012. In addition, the US added two of its top commanders namely Hamad el Khairy and Ahmed el Tilemsi to United States list of Designated Global Terrorists.

The establishment of the Ansar al Sunnah Brigade was announced by Emir Wahid al Sahrawi on 4 January 2013. This Brigade was populated mostly by the faithful of the region most of who belonged to the Songhai ethnic group. The *Ansar al Sunnah* comprised of four *Katiba(s)* (battalions) as follows:

- The Abdullahi Azzam *Katiba* in honour of Osama Bin Laden's mentor and co-founder of the Al-Qaeda Network that was assassinated through bombing in 1989.
- The Al Zarqawi *Katiba* in honour of the Al-Qaeda Emir in Iraq, named Abu Musab al Zarqawi that was assassinated through airstrike in 2006.
- The Abu al Laith al Libi *Katiba* in honour of Al-Qaeda ideologue and to commander that was assassinated in a drone attack in 2008; and
- The Martyrdom-seekers *Katiba* for new combatants committed to the struggle.[28]

[26] Al Jazeera, "Mali Islamist group "kills Algerian diplomat" accessed 22 November 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/9/2/mali-islamist-group-kills-algerian-diplomat.

[27] Al Jazeera, "Algeria baffled by reported diplomat murder" accessed 21 November 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/9/3/algeria-baffled-by-reported-diplomat-murder.

[28] Ibid.

Al-Mourabitoun

The Al-Mourabitoun is an insurgent group founded in 2013 following the merger of the MUJAO and Al-Mulathamun Masked Ones Brigade founded by Mokhtar Belmokhtar following his breakaway from Abdelmalek Droukdel's led AQIM. In December 2013, the US Department of States designated the Al-Mulathamun Battalion as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity under Section 1(b) of Executive Order (E.O.) 13224.[29] The consequence of the FTO and E.O. 13224 designations include:

> A prohibition against knowingly providing, or attempting or conspiring to provide material support or resources to, or engaging in transactions with the al-Mulathamun Battalion, and freezing of all properly and interests in property of the organisation that are in the United States, or come within the United States or the control of U.S. persons.[30]

The Al-Mourabitoun however reaffirmed its allegiance to Al-Qaeda leadership of Ayman Al-Zawahiri in 2015. The Al-Mourabitoun existed as a violent pro-Sunni and Qutbist organisation whose strategic purpose is to spread extremist Islam in West Africa and the Sahel.[31] Its name reawakens the historical links with the Almoravid dynasty of Berbers that invaded the ancient Ghana Empire in the eleventh century.[32] In August 2015, the Al-Mourabitoun claimed responsibility for attacking the Byblos hotel in Sevare, a city in central Mali about 600 km from Bamako resulting in the death of 17 persons.[33] Its spokesman, Souleyman Mohammed

[29] United States Department of States "Terrorist Designation of the Al-Mulathamun Battalion" Office of the Spokesperson, Washington DC, 18 December 2013, accessed 29 March 2021, http://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/218880.htm.

[30] Ibid.

[31] "Al-Mourabitoun" Counterterrorism Project, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/al-mourabitoun.

[32] Ryan CK Hess "Lassoing the Haboob Countering Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin in Mali" Maj Ryan CK Hess, accessed 29 March 2021, https://media.defense.gov/2020/Aug/28/2002487023/-1/-1/1/HESS.PDF.

[33] Al Jazeera News, "Al Qaeda-linked group claims Mali Hotel Siege" https://www.france24.com/en/20150811-al-qaeda-linked-group-claims-mali-hotel-siege-al-mourabitoun (accessed 29 March 2021).

Kennen, declared that "the hand of Allah has guided the Mujahideen of Sevare against the enemies of Islam.[34] The casualties included four Malian soldiers, four attackers, as well as nine civilians of which five worked for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). On 10 August 2015, three soldiers were killed while four others sustained injuries when they ran into an improvised explosive device around Diabozo. The group also claimed responsibility for the attack on the Radisson Blu hotel in Mali's capital Bamako in November 2015, as well as the January 2016 attacks on Splendid Hotel and Cappuccino in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.[35] In 2017, the Al-Mourabitoun was among the four groups that formed the JNIM in 2017.

In addition to the terrorist acts linked to previously mentioned terrorist groups based in Mali, Boko Haram has also been an active terrorist group. In mid-2011, seven suspected Boko Haram members were arrested while transiting through Niger to Mali for training. In response to French counterterrorism operations in Mali, the Nigeria-based Boko Haram abducted seven French nationals of the Moulin-Fournier family around the Waza National Park in Far North Cameroon on February 2013 in solidarity with pro-Taliban groups in Mali. The hostages were later released in April 2013.[36]

Terrorism in Mali in the Wake of Islamic State

Beyond the Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the rise and fall of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), otherwise known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) or Daesh, also contributed immensely to the scourge of terrorism in Mali. The Islamic State emerged from the remnants of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) established by Abu Musab al Zarqawi in 2004 as a response to the United States led invasion of

[34] Ibid.

[35] "Profile Al-Mourabioun" BBC News, 16 January 2016, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34881170.

[36] T. Musa and B. Felix, "Militants kidnap French Family in North Cameroon" *Reuters*, Tuesday, 19 February 2013, accessed 28 March 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-kidnapping/militants-kidnap-french-family-in-north-cameroon--idUSBRE9110MA20130219.

Iraq of 2003.[37] Following the death of Zarqawi in 2006 as a result of counterterrorism offensives by United States troops, the AQI went into obscurity. The group however re-emerged in 2011 taking advantage of the growing instability in Iraq and Syria occasioned by the Arab Spring and by 2013. On 29th June 2014, Islamic State which began assaults on Mosul and Tikrit, declared a caliphate stretching from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq under the leadership of Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.[38]

To neutralise Islamic State, the United States launched "Operation Inherent Resolve" which supported the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) which is a coalition of Syrian Kurds and Arabs. Yet, the Islamic State continued to expand territories and spread its influence and at the zenith of its reign, the organisation controlled over a third of Syria and about 40% of Iraq including Mosul which is the second largest city in Iraq and Raqqa in northern Syria which served as ISIS' nominal capital.[39] By 2015, the Islamic State had spread its influence to Egypt and the Sahel and also executed major attacks on Egypt, France, and the United States, among others.

The Islamic State lost about 95% of areas under its control in 2017 and on 19th December 2018, former President of the United States, Donald Trump announced the defeat of ISIS and his intention to withdraw all 2,000 US troops supporting the SDF coalition in Syria. This was followed by the loss of Islamic State's last stronghold of Baghouz to the SDF accompanied by mass surrender of Islamic State fighters on 23rd March 2019, a move that signalled the collapse of the caliphate. Abu Bakr al Baghdadi was later killed on 26th October 2019 following US counterterrorism offensives in northern Syria. However, it is important to note that the much-trumpeted collapse of Islamic State did not however imply the end of its influence as several of its fighters fled Syria into North Africa and the Sahel.

In central Mali, the incidence of terrorism has visibly escalated in Segou and Mopti regions since the emergence of the Islamic State linked groups

[37] Hassan Hassan, "The True Origins of ISIS" *The Atlantic* 30 November 2018, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/11/isis-origin-anbari-zarqawi/577030/.

[38] "Timeline: The Rise, Spread and Fall of the Islamic State" The Wilson Centre, *Insight and Analysis*, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state.

[39] Ibid.

in 2015. As of 2018, over 500 civilian lives were lost and an estimated 60,000 internally displaced while over 972,000 people were in need of humanitarian assistance.[40] The Macina Liberation Front (MLF), which is largely dominated by the Fulani ethnic group, is the major Non-State Armed Group that operates in Central Mali. It emerged in 2015 seeking to establish an Islamic Republic in central Mali covering Segou, Mopti and Timbuktu areas. At its inception, Amadou Koufa, a Fulani radical preacher that established the MLF aligned it with Iyad ag Ghali's Ansar al Dine. He manipulated Fulani grievances carefully woven around frustrations arising from cattle rustling, abuses by certain administrative and traditional authorities including intergenerational identity crisis associated with religion and ethnic questions in a heterogenous polity of Mali.[41] Koufa received military training between July and December 2012 in the Timbuktu region when it was under extremist control. Subsequently, he led a major offensive jointly executed by an extremist coalition involving Ansar al Dine, AQIM and MUJAO which captured the city of Konna in central Mali on 10th January 2013 and declared himself the Sultan of Konna.[42] The MLF determination to overrun Bamako was only halted by the French intervention through *Operation Serval* in January 2013. By 2015, the MLF attacked military assets in Boulkessi, Tenenkou and Nampala villages and also claimed responsibility for the attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako which the Al-Mourabitoun also claimed.[43] In 2018, it was estimated that 63% of violent extremism in central Mali and about one-third of extremist violence in the country was perpetrated by the MLF.[44] MLF's tactics include: IEDs, car bombs and person-borne improvised explosive devices (PBIEDs). Such method were used during its attack against the national G5 Sahel Joint Force Headquarters on 29 July 2018 in Sevare town, Mopti region of Mali.[45]

[40] Le Rox, Op. Cit.

[41] Pauline Le Rox, "Confronting Central Mali's Extremist Threat" in *Africa Centre for Strategic Studies*, 22 February 2019, 2.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Staff Writer, "New G5 Sahel Joint Force Commander moves HQ to Mali Capital Bamako after June attack" *The Defence Post*, 28 September 2018, accessed 29 March 2021, https://www.thedefensepost.com/2018/09/28/g5-sahel-joint-force-hq-bamako-mali/.

Since 2017, the two major active groups in Mali are the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the Jamaát Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) which is the Sahel-based branch of al-Qaeda (AQ) that was created from the merger of the Ansar Dine, Macina Liberation Front (MLF), Al-Mourabitoun, and the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Because of the merger, Mali has emerged as a theatre of recurring terrorist attacks. Attacks by the JNIM and ISGS in Mali attracted accolades from the Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State networks. For instance, on 1st February 2021, the AQAP heaped praise on the JNIM for avenging the insults to Prophet Mohammed through a series of attacks JNIM executed against French forces in the Sahel beginning in December 2020.[46] Similarly, the Islamic State published posters showing a fatal blow to America on account of IS successes in Africa, especially in Mali and Nigeria. In September 2024, the JNIM claimed responsibility for attacks within Bamako which targeted defence and security assets of Mali including an airport.[47]

Terrorism in Mali is financed by mining, especially under-regulated gold mining. The Kayes region contributes an estimated 77% of Mali's gold production which accounts for 75% of the country's export revenue, 25% of the budget, and 8% of Mali's GDP.[48] There is speculation that terrorist groups could engage in illicit gold mining to sustain their presence in Mali and also expand influence to Guinea and Senegal. This speculation was reinforced on 8th February 2021 when Senegalese authorities announced that they had neutralised a local cell of the Macina battalion in Kidira, a Senegalese town that shares contiguous borders with Kayes region of Mali.[49] The available opportunities for illicit mining of gold in Mali are inadequately regulated thereby creating room for

[46] SITE Intelligence Group, "AQAP praised JNIM for avenging insults to Prophet through attacks on French forces" intelsubscription@siteintelgroup.com (accessed 1 February 2021).

[47] Wedaeli Chibelushi and Paul Njie, "Al Qaeda-linked group says it was behind Mali Attack" British Broadcasting Corporation News, 17 September 2024; https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce8d996x1r0o (accessed 18 October 2024).

[48] Fahiraman Rodrigue Kone and Nadia Adam, "How Western Mali could become a Goldmine for Terrorists" *ISS Today*, accessed 25 April 2021, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-western-mali-could-become-a-gold-mine-for-terrorists.

[49] Ibid.

exploitation of the mining process to fund terrorist acts by the numerous armed Islamist groups.

Official Government Response to Terrorism in Mali

The Government of Mali has taken several legal, policy, and operational measures to combat terrorism in the country. In 2012, the government enacted the law to combat criminal enrichment and trafficking in persons. It also enacted Law No. 2013-016 on 21 May 2013 which was an amendment of the Law No. 01-080 of 20.08.2001 on the Code of Criminal Procedure instituted in the High Court of Commune VI, District of Bamako constituting a specialised judicial unit to strengthen the fight against terrorism and related crimes. Other related instruments adopted by the Government of Mali to combat terrorism include:

- Inter-Ministerial Order No. 2011-4671/MJ-MEF-MSIPC of 18th November 2011 instituting the Inter-Ministerial Committee against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism.
- The draft decree freezing funds for criminal assets is developed and validated by the Inter-Ministerial Committee against money laundering and terrorist financing.
- The Uniform Law No 008 of 17 March 2016 adopted by member states of the West African Monetary Union (WAEMU) otherwise referred to as (Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) in French which is the basic legal instrument regulating AML/CFT in Mali is adopted.[50] Member states of the UEMOA are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

The legislations were designed to enhance the capacity of the defence and security organisations especially the Armed Forces of Mali (FAMa), the National Gendarmerie and the National Guards while they conduct counterterrorism operations following the invitation by the Ministry of

[50] GIABA, Fifth Monitoring Report, Mutual Evaluation, Mali, November 2013, 4.

Security which supervises the National Police.[51] In 2019, a total of 19 counterterrorism cases were investigated and tried in Mali of which convictions and sentences ranging from five years to life imprisonment were secured in 12 of the cases.[52]

Mali further demonstrates commitments to the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2396(2017) of 21st December 2017 which among others resolutions urge member states to strengthen their efforts to stem the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) through measures on border control, criminal justice and information sharing and counter-extremism.[53] In this regard, Mali's customs officials monitor the flow of goods at the borders and ports of entry and enforce customs laws while the gendarmerie and the National Border Police provide support against border related crimes in Mali.

In its efforts at strengthening border control, customs officials under the Ministry of Economy and Finance monitor the flow of goods and enforce customs laws at borders. The Government of Mali receives Public Key Infrastructure certificates for passport security information from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); however, the information sharing is done manually and inconsistently. Mali's international passports, including diplomatic and official versions, incorporate security measures including micro-printing, ultraviolet features and a full-colour digital photo. In addition, Mali also receives INTERPOL notices, but the INTERPOL database is unavailable at some points of entry.[54]

On its part, the United States embassy in Bamako trained a special unit known locally as Groupe de Sécurité et d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GSIGN) to support the Malian Government's stabilisation efforts in the Segou region.[55] The GSIGN was to support other gendarmerie posts, conduct patrols and investigate suspicious activities. The GSIGN also provides logistical supports for counterterrorism

[51] United States Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019" accessed 18 April 2021, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1289696/download.

[52] Ibid.

[53] United Nations Security Council, "Security Council resolution 2396 (2017) on threats to international peace and security caused by returning foreign terrorist fighters" accessed 24 April 2021, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/sres23962017.

[54] United States Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019" accessed 18 April 2021, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1289696/download.

[55] Ibid.

operations. These supports have so far successfully disrupted plots by terrorist groups planning to attack soft targets leading to the seizure of stockpiled arms and ammunition from the terrorists.[56]

In 2017, the defence forces of Mali launched *Operation Dambe* as part of measures to counter the activities of terrorist groups in the country. This operation was characterised by the deployment of 4,000 soldiers to eight zones covering northern and central Mali.[57] Subsequently, *Operation Dambe* was focused on population-centric areas and along the border with Burkina Faso and Niger and was complementary to mobile patrol units deployed to disrupt armed Islamist groups.[58]

Mali's government also promotes reconciliation and community engagement to build resilience and foster communal harmony necessary to combat terrorism and violent extremism. For instance, on 9th March 2021, Mali's National Reconciliation Minister, Colonel-Major Ismaël Wagué held meetings with Youssouf Toloba, Leader of Dogon self-defence group, *Dana Ambassagou* (local vigilante) relating to intercommunal tensions and fight against jihadist elements in the Mopti region.[59] The *Dana Ambassagou* declined to sign a peace agreement late February.

In its efforts to stem the tide of radicalisation, Mali launched a new Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy in 2019. The strategy's purpose was to improve governance, reinforce security, promote development and increase communications with local citizens on government actions.[60] This strategy is also designed to strengthen the government's efforts at preventing radicalisation and terrorism. In addition, the Government established a National Secretariat under the Ministry of Religious

[56] Ibid.

[57] Pauline Le Roux, "Responding to the Rise in Violent Extremism in the Sahel" *Africa Security Brief* No. 36, December 2, 2019, accessed 25 April 2021, https://africacenter.org/publication/responding-rise-violent-extremism-sahel/.

[58] Ibid.

[59] International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Tracking Conflict Worldwide: Mali" March 2021, accessed 25 April 2021, https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/print?page=1&location%5B0%5D=26&date_range=cust&t=CrisisWatch+Database+Filter.

[60] United States Department of States, Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Mali" accessed 25 April 2021, https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/mali/.

Affairs and Worship in February 2019 to facilitate the smooth implementation of this strategy.[61] The Ministry is however constrained in the implementation of its tasks by inadequate resources and poor coordination with other ministries.

Regional and International Counterterrorism Cooperation

In the sphere of regional and international cooperation against terrorism, Mali has played an active part in several international treaties and agreements. In the last decade, Mali has welcomed international interventions to build the requisite stability in the central region, northern and Sahel regions needed for effective counterterrorism operations and the protection of civilians in the troubled areas. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the G-5 Sahel, the European Union backed Takuba Task Force and the France-led Operation Barkhane are examples.

Prior to its withdrawal from the ECOWAS alongside Burkina Faso and Niger in January 2024, Mali was party to the ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy. The Government of Mali is also party to counterterrorism instruments at the African Union and United Nations. The Government and people of Mali are also openly receptive to counterterrorism assistance from the United States such as the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) conducted by the United States. Personnel from Mali's armed forces also participated in the multinational border security operations under the G-5 Sahel mandate prior to its closure. Mali is not a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) but it participates in GCTF regional workshops and events. The GCTF, established by the UN in 2011, is an informal, apolitical, multilateral counterterrorism platform that aims to provide international counterterrorism solutions. The mission of the GCTF is "to diminish terrorist recruitment and increase countries' civilian capabilities for dealing with terrorist threats within their borders and regions."[62]

[61] Ibid.

[62] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "Mission" https://www.thegctf.org/Who-we-are/Background-and-Mission.

Mali is also a member of the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and its national Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) known locally as La Cellule Nationale de Traitement des Informations Financières (CENTIF). Mali is also a member of the Egmont Group which is an informal network of FIUs dedicated to Anti Money Laundering/Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT). Mali therefore seeks compliance with existing national and international instruments relating to CFT. Despite the efficacy of these programmes, the risk of terrorist financing in Mali remains considerably high as a result of domestic and cross-border terrorist activities. This risk level is sustained by the vast under-inhabited and largely porous under-patrolled border frontiers Mali shares with seven different African countries in a regional area threatened by terrorist groups.

As part of its strategic counterterrorism partnership in the Sahel, the European Union launched the Takuba Task Force (TTF) in March 2020. Its objectives include training Malian soldiers, gathering intelligence and carrying out targeted operations by Special Forces.[63] The Task Force derived its name, Takuba from Sword, which is commonly used in the Sahel and was established at the request of the Governments of Mali and Niger to help contain the escalating insecurities in the region. The political statement establishing the Takuba Task Force was launched by 11 European Union countries alongside Mali and Niger namely Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Central to its mandate is the provision of advice, assistance and support for Mali's armed forces in coordination with G5 Sahel partners and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Others initiatives include the European Union's civilian and military missions such as the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali (EUCAP Mali), the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Niger).[64]

[63] Grégoire Sauvage, "Security in the Sahel: Is the Takuba Task Force Still Welcome in Mali" *France24* 28 January 2022, https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220128-security-in-the-sahel-is-the-takuba-task-force-still-welcome-in-mali (accessed 20 October 2024).

[64] Sahel Coalition, "The Takuba Task Force is Launched" 3 June 2020, https://www.coalition-sahel.org/en/la-task-force-takuba-est-lancee/ (accessed 20 October 2024).

The TTF comprised mostly of European Special Forces was placed under the command of France-led Operation Barkhane with mandate to combat terrorism in the Liptako shared border area of Mali and Niger. It operated from military bases of the Malian Armed Forces at Ansongo Menaka, Gao, and N'djamena in Chad. It addition to its operational mandate, the Takuba Task Force was an indication that France was downgrading its operations in Mali while the European Union is actively poise to fill the role of France whose nine years of counterterrorism engagement in the Sahel was characterised by mixed results as terrorists continued to unleash audacious attacks in the region.[65] Paradoxically, the mission ended following diplomatic rows between Mali's military leadership and the withdrawal of French forces involved in Operation Barkhane on 30 June 2022.

Challenges of Official Response to Terrorism Engagements in Mali

Despite concerted efforts made by Mali to combat terrorism in the country as demonstrated in the introduction of basic legal and policy frameworks as well as institutions for combating terrorist financing, act of terrorism by global jihadi groups still persists. The continuing terrorist activity can be attributed to a number of factors which include the existence of a vulnerable population that is easily recruited, existence of active terror groups that exploit domestic grievances and porous borders to wreak havoc in Mali and the Sahel.

Furthermore, despite the supports provided by the National Gendarmerie and the National Border Police in aid to the customs and immigration towards strengthening border control, Mali still has little or no control over its borders. Consequently, terrorists continue to cross Mali's borders with ease despite the commitments and progress towards the implementation of UNSCR 2396 which calls for biometric screening at established ports of entry, the country is still unable to effectively control its vast and porous borders. The effectiveness in border governance and control is further hampered by capacity limitations including training shortfalls and basic equipment shortages. These shortages make it

[65] Sauvage, *Op. Cit.*

difficult for Mali to secure its lengthy national borders estimated at about 4,500 miles.[66]

The counterterrorism engagements in Mali have also provoked human rights concerns. Both the armed Islamic groups, French forces attached to Operation Barkhane as well as Malian defence and security forces have been accused of killing civilians. In March 2021, Malian troops killed six ethnic Fulani civilians in the Douentza and Youwarou districts of the Mopti region (central Mali) and another five civilians were killed during airstrikes by Operation Barkhane forces in the Indelimane area of Gao. Despite denials by Operation Barkhane, United Nations investigations concluded that at least 22 persons including three Katiba Serma members were killed in Bounti village in Mopti following Operation Barkhane airstrikes on 3 January 2021. A total of 19 persons which included 16 civilians were directly affected while three civilians died of injuries during their transfer for emergency treatment.[67]

The lack of good inter-agency cooperation on counter-terrorism also has a negative impact on Mali's counter-terrorism policy and programmes. Cooperation issues relating to the implementation of counter financing of terrorism standards with emphasis on functional mechanisms and intelligence and information sharing. Mali's counterterrorism efforts are further constrained by logistics, resource constraints, corruption and an inadequate judicial process associated with the prosecution of terrorist cases, training deficits and lack of automated national criminal report management system needed for effective law enforcement all contribute to the lack of efficiency and effectiveness in Mali's counterterrorism efforts.

The resurgence of military coups and accompanying politicisation of international intervention in Mali has emerged another fundamental challenge confronting counterterrorism engagements in the country. The resurgence of the military coup in 2012, caused ECOWAS to suspend Mali from the regional organisation and measures were taken towards the restoration of democracy in the country. Similar reactions also accompanied the military coup in 2020 which stimulated uncertainties for

[66] Ibid.

[67] United Nations, "UN Investigation Concludes French Military Airstrike Killed Mali Civilians" United Nations News, 30 March 2021; https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1088722#:~:text="At%20least%2022%20people%2C%20including%20three%20of%20the,their%20injuries%20during%20their%20transfer%20for%20emergency%20treatment (accessed 18 October 2024).

counterterrorism cooperation in the country following the diplomatic rifts between Bamako, France and some western countries including the ECOWAS and United Nations. The Government of Mali expressed dissatisfaction with the deployment of 90 Danish Special Forces to the Operation Takuba Task Force without its consent and called for the withdrawal of the personnel. This incident introduced new challenges for counterterrorism efforts in Mali and the Sahel as Denmark and France condemned the ruling military authority in Bamako. The Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jeppe Kofod, announced the withdrawal of Denmark's troops due to its disagreement with military leaders on Bamako.[68] Meanwhile, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian claimed: "This junta is illegitimate and it is taking irresponsible actions… It bears all the responsibility for the withdrawal of the Danish forces and is isolating itself even more from its international partners."[69] In its reaction, the military government in Bamako gave Ambassador Joel Meyer of France 72 hours to leave the country in January 2022.[70]

In another incident, the military government in Bamako also gave the Ambassador of Sweden, Kristina Kuhnel 72 hours to leave its territorial jurisdiction as a result of comments made by the Swedish Minister for international Development Cooperation and Trade, Johan Forssell. The latter claimed that Bamako "cannot support Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and at the same time receive several hundred million crowns each year in development aid."[71] Sweden was responding to the growing partnership between Mali and Russia whose Africa Corp (formerly known as Wagner Group) was expanding its presence and providing counterterrorism support to Mali even as the Russia-Ukraine war was raging.

[68] "France Condemns Mali's "Irresponsible" Expulsion of Danish Troops" *Radio France International*, 27 January 2022, https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220127-france-condemns-mali-s-irresponsible-expulsion-of-danish-troops (accessed 20 October 2024).

[69] Ibid.

[70] British Broadcasting Corporation News, "French Ambassador Expelled from Mali" 30 January 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-60202343 (accessed 18 October 2024).

[71] Aljazeera News, "Mali Orders Swedish Ambassador to Leave within 72 Hours" 9 August 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/9/mali-orders-swedish-ambassador-to-leave-within-72-hours (accessed 18 October 2024).

The Government of Mali also engaged the United Nations involvement in the turbulent security dynamics in the country and demanded the withdrawal of the MINUSMA without delays. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) responded with the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2690 on 30 June 2023 terminating the mandate of the MINUSMA while requesting for safe and orderly withdrawal of the Mission by 31 December 2023 followed by a liquidation period.[72] The exit of the MINUSMA provided Russia's Africa Corp with more opportunities to expand its engagements in Mali and the Sahel.

ECOWAS, which since 1975 served as the dominant Regional Economic Community in West Africa, was next to experience the new diplomatic onslaughts from Bamako. This followed Mali's resolve with Burkina Faso and Niger to withdraw membership of the community in preference for the newly established L'Alliance des Etats du Sahel (AES) leveraging on the Liptako-Gourma Charter of 16 September 2023. Within the framework of the Liptako-Gourma Charter, the contracting parties, comprising of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger pledged to support one another in the sphere of security. Article 2 of the Charter provides the architecture for collective defence and mutual assistance of the contracting parties.[73]

At its inception, the AES provided the member states with an architecture of collective defence and mutual assistance in the fight against terrorism but by January 2024, it provided the backbone for the abrupt withdrawal of the contracting parties from the ECOWAS. In April 2024, a joint military operation in the Menaka region of Mali, which involved troops of AES killed Abu Huzeifa, an Islamic State commander of Morocco nationality.[74] Huzeifa had a $5 million bounty placed on him by the United States over his role in the 2017 terrorist attack in Niger in

[72] United Nations News, "Last UN Peacekeepers Poised for Complete Withdrawal from Mali" https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1145207 (accessed 18 September 2024).

[73] Alliance of Sahel States, "Charter of the Liptako-Gourma Establish Alliance of Sahel States Between Burkina Faso, Republic of Mali and Republic of Niger", Bamako, 16 September 2023.

[74] Mohammed Yusuf, "Malian Forces Kill Islamic State Commander" *Voice of America*, 30 April 2024, https://www.voanews.com/a/malian-army-kills-islamic-state-leader-who-attacked-u-s-nigerien-forces/7591924.html (accessed 15 October 2024).

which several civilians and security personnel including four United States military personnel were killed.[75]

Subsequently, the Heads of State of the AES names Captain Ibrahim Traore of Burkina Faso, Colonel Assimi Goita of Mali and Brigadier General Abdourahamane Tiani of Niger, met at Niamey on 6 July 2024 and transformed the AES into a Confederation. The Confederation is anchored on the principles of three Ds principles namely, Diplomacy, Defence, and Development.[76]

Mali further severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine over the latter's alleged complicity in the July 2024 Tuareg attacks which targeted Mali's Defence and Security Forces in Tinzawatene region of Kidal, northern Mali resulting in the death of 47 Malian soldiers and 84 Wagner mercenaries.[77] The political authority in Mali charged that the statement of Andruy Yusov, of Ukraine's military intelligence agency that Malian rebels had received the necessary information to conduct the attack simply "admitted Ukraine's involvement in a cowardly, treacherous and barbaric attack by armed terrorist groups that resulted in the death of members of the Malian defence and security forces."[78] The Government of Ukraine however contends that the decision by Mali's transitional government to sever bilateral links was taken without a thorough study of the incident's facts and circumstances.

In solidarity with Mali, member states of the Confederation of Sahel States sent a joint letter to the United Nations Security Council on 19 August 2024 to denounce what they referred to as "the Ukrainian authorities" support for international terrorism. The confederation further requested the UNSC to condemn the aggression against Mali and take appropriate measures against the Ukrainian authorities.[79] The political authority in Mali had earlier sent a written notification to Security Council to expose French acts of aggression as well as their involvement in the

[75] Ibid.

[76] Government of Mali, *op. cit.* 2024.

[77] "Ukraine Denies Involvement in Mali Attack, Says Cutting of Diplomatic Ties Shortsighted" *The Irish Times*, Monday 5 August 2024.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Republic of Mali, September 2024.

promotion of three forms of terrorism in the Sahel:; armed terrorism, economic terrorism, and media terrorism.[80]

It is instructive to note that Mali further faces added security challenges following the adoption of *Pacte d'Honneur Pour L'Unite Du Peuple De L'Azawad* establishing the *Front de Liberation de l'Azawad* (FLA), that is, Azawad Liberation Front on 30 November 2024. The pact was adopted at Tinzaouaten by the leaders of four major pro-Azawad groups following meetings held alongside local religious leaders, from 26 to 30 November, to discuss the socio-political and security situation in Azawad and the wider Sahel. The FLA was therefore established as a unified response of pro-Azawad groups to the real and perceived insecurity in the region and as a means to further counter the violence perpetrated by the Armed Forces of Mali and the Africa Corps. The four contracting groups are:

- Le Haut Counseil Pour l'Unite de l'Azawad (HCUA),
- Le Mouvement National pour la Liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA),
- Le Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (MAA) and
- Le Groupe d'Autodefense Touareg Imghad et Allies (GATIA).

There however exist speculations that hostile extra-continental interests opposed to the military regime in Bamako and growing Russian presence in the Sahel are working to use the pro-Azawad unity to destabilise the Government of Mali using local elements. The looming danger is that Mali could be destabilised by covert superpower rivalries involving the Russia on the one hand against France and the United States on the other.

Conclusion

Mali's vulnerability to terrorism has continued despite the combination of domestic and international actions to combat it. A combination of internal political contests, deep rooted grievances and vast uninhabited and under-patrolled territories serve as vessels for terrorist activity, including illicit transnational trafficking between West and North Africa. This vulnerability is deepened by Mali's vast, porous and under-patrolled borders and the incidence of artisanal mining of gold which is largely

[80] Ibid.

under-regulated. The Arab Spring in the MENA, especially the violent overthrow of the Ghadaffi regime in Libya opened a Pandora's box for the exportation of violent extremism, terrorism and insurgencies within Mali's jurisdiction and beyond the Sahel to other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, it is not surprising that armed Islamist groups have found parts of Malian territory strategically important for use as sanctuary for recruitment, training and attacks.

Counterterrorism efforts of the Government of Mali including those of its regional and international partners have been handicapped by the fragility of the Malian state, limited availability of trained counterterrorism personnel in defence and security services, and other constraints experienced in the implementation of basic standards for countering financing of terrorism in the country. Even the presence of the United Nations mission and French troops escalated extremist grievances that sustained terrorist acts on the country as a vast portion of Mali's under-governed territory is exploited by terrorist organisations that operate within and beyond her borders. Mali therefore continues to play host to terror groups that resort to acts of terrorism to press their political objectives. Their armed attacks have inflicted injury on communal harmony and inter-group relations.

Mali remains locked in Sahel's arc of insecurity and therefore requires effective national and international actions to counter the threats of terrorism. The utility of the Whole-of-State and Whole-of-Society response to repulse and defeat the scourge of terrorism therefore remains relevant. In this regard, effective measures should be made to rebuild the socio-economic and political sub-structures of the Malian polity which was adversely distorted by the Libyan conflict. Adequate interventions in this regard remains germane to strengthening community resilience necessary for effective counterterrorism and counter violent extremism efforts in the country while also strengthening the responsiveness of the defence and security services.

Some Major Terrorist Incidents in Mali

- The JNIM fighters attacked targets within Bamako on 17 September 2024. Targets included the Banankabougou neighbourhood, the Faladie military police school where the elite unit of Mali's gendarmerie is based and the military airport in the capital city. The

Modibbo Keita International Airport, Bamako was temporarily shut down to contain the aggression.[81]

- Fighters aligned with the ISGS killed 33 Malian soldiers and wounded several others in an ambush on a Malian convoy near Ansongo as the convoy moved along the Tessit road in the Gao region on Monday 15 March 2021. These attackers also confiscated three operational vehicles used by the troops including several guns and ammunition as spoils of war.
- In another incident, fighters from the JNIM entered a one-month ceasefire agreement with the Donso militia on Monday, 15 March 2021. These fighters had earlier laid siege on Farabougou village in Niono District of Segou region. The Donso militia is committed to protecting Bambara interests.
- On Thursday, 4 March 2021, another group of fighters aligned to the JNIM attacked an army position in Dinangorou village, Koro district in Mopti region of central Mali. This incident resulted in the death of one soldier while eight of the al-Qaeda-linked attackers were killed.
- The Sahel based branch of the al-Qaeda group, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) claimed responsibility for a mine blast that occurred on Friday 26 February in Mali's Menaka region. They also claimed responsibility for detonating explosives on a French armoured vehicle as part of the ongoing jihad against the French army.
- On Thursday 11 January 2021, the JNIM claimed responsibility for the Killing 15 Malian Troops in Boni. The group described this attack as revenge for French bombing guests at a wedding ceremony at Bounti in which at least 22 people were killed of which 19 were civilian guests including three out of the five alleged members of the Katiba Serma.[82] The JNIM insisted France should pull out its troops from the Sahel.

[81] Wedaeli Chibelushi and Paul Njie, "Al Qaeda-linked group says it was behind Mali Attack" British Broadcasting Corporation News, 17 September 2024; https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce8d996x1r0o (accessed 18 October 2024).

[82] Africa News, "UN Probe finds French strike in Mali in January killed 19 civilians" accessed 21 November 2021, https://www.africanews.com/2021/03/30/un-probe-finds-french-strike-in-mali-in-january-killed-19-civilians/∠.

- Unknown gunmen launched an ambush and IED attack on Malian Armed Forces (FAMa) at Mopti on Monday 12 October 2020. This incident led to the death of 12 soldiers while 14 others were injured. In addition, 14 civilians including two women and a child were also killed during the attack. Nine of the terrorists were killed in a counter attack by the FAMa and two terrorist's vehicles were destroyed.
- On Friday 4 September 2020, some unknown gunmen executed an attack on a FAMa military convoy at Guire town in Mali using IEDs and automatic weapons leading to the death of 10 soldiers while four military vehicles were damaged. Twenty of the terrorists were killed by the FAMa in a counter attack.
- Four Malian soldiers were also killed on Thursday 27 August 2020 in an ambush launched by unidentified terrorists in the Mopti region.
- The JNIM killed eight Malian soldiers in an ambush at Segou on Wednesday, 5 August 2020 and also destroyed four military vehicles and captured seven vehicles.
- On Thursday 27 August 2020, Four Malian soldiers were killed while 12 other wounded following ambush by unknown terrorists in the Mopti region.
- On Friday 31 July 2020, the JNIM executed a suicide attack on a French military camp in Gossi located in Mali's Timbuktu region. The attackers used two vehicle-borne IEDs and also fired some mortal shells killing some French soldiers while some of the JNIM attackers were also killed in the incident.
- On Monday, 27 July 2020, the JNIM killed three (3) Malian soldiers during an attack on a military position in Mopti province of central Mali. The group also captured two vehicles, weapons and ammunition including money and teabags from the military in the attack.
- On Tuesday 21 July 2020, a pro-Al-Qaeda extremist group, the *Warith al-Qassam* encouraged Muslim youths and demonstrators in Mali to join the JNIM's jihad for enduring political change in the country instead of merely participating in popular demonstrations. The message was conveyed through the use of a 20-second video designed to incite Muslim youths to action. The footage in the video reveals security personnel pursuing unarmed protesters with an armoured personnel carrier. The protesters were demonstrating against the crusader French occupation. Violence was stressed as the sole means to "break the head of the tyrants" and urged the Muslims

to pursue the establishment of Islamic governance to preserve their faith, rights and interests.

- On Tuesday 7 July 2020, JNIM also detonated an IED on a UN convoy in Kidal region leading to the death of three Chadian soldiers and destruction of an armoured car in the convoy. The JNIM attackers also launched rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) on surrounding Muslim villages in the region.
- Fighters linked to JNIM attacked a security and customs post along the Bamako-Kayes Road on Thursday 9 April 2020.
- Fighters of ISIS-GS attacked a military base at Indelimane, Menaka region killing at least 54 soldiers. It is widely believed that the masterminds of this terror Act which took place on Friday 1 November 2019 utilised a Red Cross vehicle to approach the base.
- On Monday, 30 September 2019, armed men affiliated to the JNIM launched simultaneous attacks on a FAMa post in Mondoro and a joint FAMa-G5 Sahel Joint Force base in Boulkessi. Over 38 FAMa soldiers were killed while another 17 were wounded and another 27 personnel were declared missing. The Government of Mali later acknowledged the attack in a mid-October report. The JNIM claimed responsibility for the attack and insisted that it killed 85 soldiers.
- On Tuesday 3 September 2019, armed men from the JNIM exploded an IED in a civilian bus in Mopti resulting in the death of 14 persons while 24 were wounded. The JNIM later issued an apology expressing regrets for the death noting that the attack was intended for French occupiers and their acolytes.
- Islamist militants suspected to be a cell of the JNIM, attacked the city of Sobane Da in Mopti region killing over 35 persons on Sunday 9 June 2019. Sobane Da is a predominantly Christian town.
- On Sunday 20 January 2019, the JNIM launched an attack on MINUSMA base near Aguelhok, in the Kidal region leading to the death of 10 peacekeepers from Chad.[83]
- The Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) claimed responsibility for two attacks on 20 August. One was of a bomb blast on MINUSMA forces at Tarkint in Gao region and the other an ambush

[83] The checklist of terrorist incidents in Mali was compiled by the authors from several online sources notably Site Intelligence and "Africa Terrorism Bulletin", African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism.

between Boni and Douentza in Mopti region in which 17 soldiers were killed.[84]

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CHAPTER 25

Niger and Terrorism Landscape in the Sahel

Danladi E. Bot

Introduction

The Niger republic is a landlocked West African country. It shares borders with Nigeria, Chad, Libya, Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Benin Republic. Niger has a total land mass of 1,267,000 km and a population of 17.8 million as at 2014. The population of Niger consists of 98.6% Muslims and 1.4% of Christians and other believers.[1] Niger is one of the world's poorest countries, and is at the centre of a complex region. Domestically, the country has seen long periods of political instability and military rule since its independence. Niger has also faced periods of armed rebellion from Tuareg communities—in the 1990s and most recently in 2007.[2]

[1] Pew Research Center, "The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: Mapping the Global Muslim Population", http://www.pewforum.orh/newassets/images/reports/muslimpopulation.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

D. E. Bot (✉)
Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria
e-mail: danladibot@yahoo.com

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Importantly, Niger is situated within the Sahel-Sahara zone, and has therefore felt the impact of turbulence in neighbouring states, including armed Islamist and Tuareg separatist movements in Mali, religious and political violence in Nigeria, and state collapse in Libya. In recent times, Niger has taken on an increasingly important role in anti-terrorist operations in the region, including joining a regional coalition to combat Boko Haram in 2015. As a result, Niger plays host to hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the violence of both the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin, and the continuing conflict in northern Mali. In the Diffa region, the UN recorded the presence of 241,000 displaced people in 2016, including 105,000 Nigerian refugees, and 121,000 IDPs.[3]

Since 2015, Niger's security has further deteriorated following Boko Haram attacks spilling over the Nigerian border. In June 2016, an attack in Bosso displaced 70,000 people, prompting the deployment of Chadian armed forces.[4] In 2017, 2 suicide bombers attacked a refugee camp – also in the Diffa region—killing 9 and abducting 40 people. Clearly, there is the threat of terrorism in Niger. Interestingly, as this is a nation burdened with poverty and development issues, while at the same time battling socio-political fissures in its society. These fissures, paired with a poisonous blend of poor governance and economic stagnation, have allowed terrorism to thrive in Niger. Bringing the aforementioned into context, this chapter will attempt to understand Niger's geographic location that has made terrorism thrive. Thereafter, it will be important to do an exposé on the history and nature of terrorism in Niger.

Understanding Niger's Peculiar Geographic Location

To properly understand terrorism in Niger, it is important to view it through the lens of Niger's geographic location, which is in the Sahel. The Sahel extends from Mauritania and Senegal on the Atlantic to Sudan on the Red Sea and Djibouti on the Gulf of Aden, and has suffered from

[3] Institute for Economics and Peace, Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Global Terrorism Index, 15, 2018, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/11/GTI-2019web.pdf.

[4] Institute for Economics and Peace, Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Global Terrorism Index, 15, 2018, http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/11/GTI-2019web.pdf.

various societal and security conflicts.[5] The Sahel is composed of 11 countries, but only 5 of them are members of the Sahel G5. G5 membership is limited to those in the central and western Sahel, an area that covers 5 million square kilometres[6]; that region, mostly a harsh desert, has been host to many security conflicts, separatist rebellions, Islamist terrorism, human trafficking, and many other transnational crimes.[7]

Through observation, it appears that the region contains all the ingredients of a "regional security complex" as described by Barry Buzan.[8] Each of the Sahel G5 states face the same security issues: Islamist terrorism, human trafficking, separatism, and smuggling. Moreover, all the G5 states experience economic instability and social unrest. With regards to international relations, the similarity among the Sahel G5 states allows researchers to focus on a regional level of analysis, of which terrorism and deserves special consideration as the major threat for all G5 states. Therefore, the Sahel G5 area represents a regional security complex threatened by many terrorist groups that cross borders and conduct attacks that hinder the national and international efforts to develop G5 states. The security issues—particularly terrorism—facing all of the G5 states is especially evident in Niger, a state susceptible to the whims and caprices of terrorist groups.

History of Terrorism in Niger

There are many factors that contributed to the rise of extremism in Niger. Algerian political instability is perhaps the most significant of these factors. The 1991 military intervention to stop elections in Algeria was seen as a coup d'état by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a religious political party. That military intervention sparked a societal conflict, which led

[5] International Crisis Group, "Map of Sahel" https://www.google.com/search?q=the+sahel+g5&rlz=1C.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Wolfram Lacher, "Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region," in *Perilous Desert: Insecurity in the Sahara*, ed. Frederic Wehrey and Anouar Boukhars, (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013), 61–85.

[8] Barry Buzan, Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post-Cold War World. In *Theories of New Regionalism. International Political Economy Series,* ed. F. Söderbaum and T.M. Shaw (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403938794_8.

to the Algerian Civil War which lasted ten years and was responsible for more than 100,000 deaths. In the following decades, the Algerian military regime conducted counter-terrorism operations and has defeated the terrorist groups. These groups retreated southward into the Sahara and Sahel, where they set up in the ungoverned areas in Mauritania, Mali, and Niger.[9] Therefore, it is clear that the Algerian civil war has to a fair degree influenced the terrorist groups' proliferating in Niger.

Even though most of the Sahel region terrorist groups first came from Algeria, the inability of the Nigerian government to secure its borders and to meet its populations' needs facilitated the terrorist groups' ability to operate in Niger. It has been observed that most Sahelian countries lack control outside their capitals, giving unhindered access to terrorist groups in outlying areas. Taking advantage of these opportunities, the terrorist groups have established deep relationships with the locals by providing social services and security to them while recruiting and training the youth. Additionally, terrorists started implementing Sharia, the Islamic Law, which is very restrictive. The combination of these facts strengthened the terrorist hold on the local populations, where locals were promoted as team leaders, managers, or terrorist leaders' representatives in the villages or tribes. More importantly, the practice of marrying local women, not dissimilar to that of ISIS, has allowed terrorists to establish close blood alliances with the local population. In sum, the terrorist groups fleeing Algerian security forces have taken advantage of the ungoverned areas in the western Niger, to organise before extending operations to Burkina Faso and Chad.

The Face of Terrorism in Niger

The first terrorist incident in Niger occurred in 1998 when Algerian and Nigerian armed forces conducted a joint military operation in North-West Niger, near the border of Algeria and Mali. This joint operation was launched against some members of the Algerian terrorist group and

[9] Yahia H. Zoubir, "Défis sécuritaires, migrations, instabilité et extrémisme violent au Sahel," in *Troubles géopolitiques et leurs effets dans la région méditerranéenne* ["Security Challenges, Migrations, Instability and Violent Extremism in the Sahel," in Geopolitical Disorders and their Effects in the Mediterranean Region] (Annuaire IEMed. de la Méditerranée 2017) https://www.iemed.org/publication/security-challenges-migrationinstability-and-violent-extremism-in-the-sahel/.

the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (SGPC) which became AQIM in September 2006.[10] During the operation, several members of the terrorist group were killed, while some managed to escape and establish a base in northern Mali. Since 1998, SPGC and later AQIM have tried to establish bases near the borders of Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger.

Niger's long and porous borders place the country at the centre of the Sahel terrorist activity. The control of northern Mali by terrorist groups prompted the intervention of France to oust the terrorists from the country on 1 January 2013. Niger participated actively in this operation and since then, the country has become a target for terrorist groups such as MUJAO spell out first before you use an acronym and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Terrorist attacks from MUJAO began in Niger with high-profile attacks on military and strategic installations on 23 May 2013. MUJAO carried out two suicide bomb attacks, one at a military camp in Agadez and another at a uranium site run by the French nuclear company, Areva, in the city of Arlit. Around 20 people, most of them Nigerian soldiers, were killed. The coordinated attacks used vehicles loaded with improvised explosives devices followed by suicide bombers, grenades, and small arms fire. Similarly, Niger became a target for Boko Haram (BH) when the country started planning to contribute troops to the regional force combating the group. On 6 February 2015, the Nigerien and Chadian military forces based in Niger were attacked by BH in the towns of Bosso and Diffa. Boko Haram fighters crossed the Komadugu River separating Nigeria and Niger to carry out the attacks. Niger began to consider terrorism as a threat to its survival after this experience.

Terrorist Groups Operating in Niger

The main terrorist groups operating in Niger are composed of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its derivative groups, and Boko Haram. On the face of it, AQIM and its affiliated groups (MUJAO, Ansar Dine) occupy the largest territory in the western Niger, while Boko

[10] S Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an Alqaida Affiliate and its Implications of the Sahara-Sahel Region", *Bulletin* No 85, Spring 2010), accessed 19 August 2020, https://concernedafricascholars.org/docs/bulletin85harmon.pdf.

Haram is operating on the Niger-Chad border in the east. It is important to analyse the origin and scope of both groups.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

Born from the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 2007, AQIM is the most important terrorist group in terms of area of operation and expertise.[11] AQIM's area of operation is primarily in the north-west and south-west of Niger. In addition, most of its founders, including Yahya Abu Hammam, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, and Abdelmalek Droukdel, have combat experience in Algeria as well as in Afghanistan and Middle East. AQIM's expertise allows it to plan and conduct complex operations such as kidnapping hotel residents, conducting suicide bombings, car bombings, or remotely triggering improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[12] Because AQIM is very experienced, it represents a major challenge to Nigerian security forces, which are weak in terms of training and equipment. Though AQIM itself is seen as an important group, mostly because of its international scope and its expertise in manipulating IEDs, its effectiveness is generally based on the operations of its local subsidiaries, which have taken different names depending on the country of operation.

The AQIM has experienced a number of changes leading to the emergence of several splinter groups, i.e. al-Tawih Wal Jihad in West Africa (TWJWA) or MUJAO and Al-Mulathamun Battalion. AQIM benefits from the porous borders in the north-west and south-west of Niger, territorial disputes and the political instability.[13] The ability of the Nigerian government to limit the activities of AQIM is frustrated by AQIM's reach into southern Libya, southern Algeria, and Mali. The fragility of the Libyan state makes it susceptible to infiltration by groups such as AQIM, thereby facilitating arms and drugs smuggling (among other

[11] Alexander Thurston, Pamela G. Faber, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): An Al-Qaeda Affiliate Case Study," *CNA*, October 2017, https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DIM-2017-U-016119-2Rev.pdf.

[12] AQIM: The Devolution of al Qaeda's North African Node," STATFOR, August 10, 2010,https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/aqim-devolution-al-qaedas-north-african-node.

[13] Mediterranean Affairs (2014), *The influence in North Africa of AQIM*, mediterraneaffairs.com/the-influence-in-north-africa-of-aqim/.

criminal activities) into Niger. Some open-source reports suggest AQIM recruited former members of the Libyan branch of Ansar Al-Sharia (another Islamist group that operates in seven countries in the area).[14] There are also indications of tensions between groups associated with AQIM and those with ISIL.

Ansar Dine

In Niger, Ansar Dine, an AQIM affiliate group, is mostly of Tuareg origins, operating in the north-western part of the country and suspected of having connections with like separatist groups. Ansar Dine has revealed itself as a major actor in north-west Niger. These groups control transit areas in north-west Niger and are likely to have established partnerships with criminal and terrorist organisations there. Ansar Dine and AQIM fought alongside each other in Mali against the Mouvement National de La Liberation de L'Azawad (MNLA). One source has even documented AQIM activity in Ansar Dine controlled territories in north-western Niger.[15]

The Islamic State in Greater Sahara

Formed through the merging of different terrorist groups, the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS) operates around border areas Niger shares with Burkina Faso and Mali. According to Jason Warner, in 2015, some terrorist groups, including the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al-Mourabitoun, merged under the leadership of Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui and formed the ISGS. This group carried out a deadly ambush against U.S. soldiers in Niger on 3 October 2017.[16]

[14] Ibid.

[15] Jason Warner, "Sub-Saharan Africa's Three "New" Islamic State Affiliates," *Combating Terrorism Center* 10, no. 1 (January 2017), accessed 20 August 2020, https://ctc.usma.edu/sub-saharan-africas-three-new-islamicstate-affiliates.

[16] Callimachi, R., Cooper, H., Schmitt E., Blinder A. and Gibbons-Neff, T., (2018) "An Endless War: Why 4 US Soldiers Died in a Remote African Desert?" *The New York Times*, 20 February, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/17/world/africa/niger-ambush-american-soldiers.html (accessed 20 August 2020).

Boko Haram

Although Niger still suffers from AQIM's activity, Boko Haram (BH) represents the main terrorist group negatively affecting Niger's security. BH is a Nigerian-born terrorist group created by Mohamed Yussuf in 2009 that has also prospered in southern Niger and Chad. Today BH is split into two main factions. One faction is headed by Abubakar Shekau and operates in the Sambisa forest that begins near Maiduguri, Borno State's capitol, and extends into Cameroon. The other, often referred to as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) was commanded by Mohammed Yusuf's son Abu Musab al-Barnawi until his killing.

The Shekau faction has extended its area of operation to Cameroon as well as to Niger. Operating in the Lake Chad region, the group continuously engages in attacks and kidnappings of civilians, including children and women, in addition to conducting suicide and car bombings. Niger's security forces are part of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) formed in 2014 to fight BH. According to Mark Wilson, the horrific violence from BH has produced more than 20,000 dead, while also being responsible more than two thousand internally displaced persons (IDP) or refugees. Wilson also mentioned that from 2016 to 2017, Niger has suffered from 25 (BH). All these, have increased the appeal for stronger action and response against terrorists from the Nigerien society.

Official Responses to Terrorism in Niger

The Nigerien government has considered terrorism a serious threat to the nation and intensified its counterterrorism operations through its Nigerien Armed Forces (NAF). The central mission for the NAF has been to prevent Niger from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. In this regard, more emphasis was put on the northern zone which was the theatre of clashes between the NAF and Tuareg rebels in the 1990s.[17] Military positions in the region were reinforced and patrols conducted to keep the zone under control. These measures significantly stalled some of the grandiose plans (carving a State-within a State) of the terrorists in northern Niger. However, the north of Niger became a transit zone for

[17] Mark Wilson, "Nigeria's Boko Haram Attacks in Numbers - as Lethal as Ever," *BBC News*, January 25, 2018, accessed 25 August 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42735414.

these terrorists, who converted their operations to drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and kidnapping. The increasing terrorist activities in Niger led to the adoption of the Antiterrorism Law N° 2011–12 and the Law N° 2011–13 against terrorism financing. Furthermore, in January 2011, an Antiterrorism National Centre was created. Nevertheless, these efforts did not stop the proliferation of terrorism because some of the terrorist suspects could not be tried due to lack of evidence and witnesses at the court of law.

In fact, terrorist activities increased in Niger in 2011 after NATO intervened in Libya to overthrow the Ghadaffi regime. The Libyan crisis resulted in the circulation of sophisticated weapons from Ghadaffi's arsenal and increased the number of terrorists in the Sahel thereby escalating the level of the terrorist threat within the region. Efforts were made by the NAF through "Operation Mali-Bero" to disrupt the movement of terrorists and arms from Libya to Mali through Niger and Algeria. However, in January 2011, northern Mali fell under the control of MUJAO, AQIM, Ansar Dine, and the rebels of Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA).[18] To prevent the spill over from the Malian situation to Niger, NAF operational capabilities were enhanced and a Special Forces battalion was deployed in the strategic town of Arlit to secure uranium sites. Subsequently, the military posts along the borders with Mali, Algeria and Libya were reinforced.

The mechanism put in place helped check the spread of the Malian crisis into Niger but did not stop the terrorists from transiting into Niger, demonstrating Niger's border control mechanisms are still to be optimised. Importantly, the first coordinated terrorist attacks in Niger occurred on 23 May 2013. Two groups of suicide bombers used vehicles loaded with explosives to attack a military barracks in Agadez and attacked a French uranium mine in Arlit killing 26 people comprising 21 soldiers and five suicide bombers.[19] The MUJAO terrorist group claimed responsibility for these attacks conducted in retaliation for Niger's involvement in the war against terrorism. The investigation carried out after the attacks

[18] A Hershkowitz, "The Tuareg in Mali and Niger: The Role of Desertification in Violent Conflict", (Ice Case Study, August 2005), accessed 20 August 2020, http://www.american.edu/ted/ice/tuareg.htm.

[19] Y Dreazen, "The New Terrorist Training Ground", (The Atlantic, 2013), accessed 26 August 2020, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/10/the-new-terrorist-training-ground/309446.

determined that the terrorists came from Libya and during the reconnaissance of the terrorist's targets, they interacted with some armed forces members. This shows that to some extent, terrorists move easily within a population thereby highlighting the difficulties encountered by the NAF to control the territory and protect key facilities.

In 2014, Boko Haram became a serious threat to the Niger Republic since they established some bases along the border with Nigeria from Lake Chad to Damasak. In January 2014, approximately 20 members of BH were arrested in Diffa, while they were planning to conduct a suicide bomb attack on a local market. In response to the (BH) threat "Operation N'GAA" was launched in June 2014 in order to limit terrorist infiltration in the South-East of Niger along the border with Nigeria.[20] About 3000 NAF personnel including 2 battalions equipped and trained in counterterrorism techniques and with the assistance of the United States were involved in this operation.[21] After the operation, there was stability in the South-East of Niger until 6 February 2015, when (BH) terrorists attacked the towns of Diffa and Bosso in the South-East. About 215 members of (BH) were killed and many were arrested. According to sources, the air support and the mechanised units were very efficient against the terrorists during the first clash. Despite this advantage, it was difficult for the NAF to deal with simultaneous, sustained attacks because there was insufficient air support for the units under attack on short notice.

Beginning in 2014, Boko Haram's violence in Borno State forced thousands of refugees to flee north into Niger, specifically its far eastern Diffa region, which shares many of the same ethnic, religious, and economic characteristics of the population in northeastern Nigeria. For instance, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in September 2017, over 115,000 Nigerian refugees live in Niger's Diffa region, and 122,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) had left their villages since the beginning of the insurgency in Nigeria.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, observed at the time that, "most of the 250,000 displaced people in Diffa live in 140 informal

[20] BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013, accessed 24 August 2020, https://www.africajournallismtheworld.com/tag/al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghreb-aqim.

[21] L Touchard, "Le Niger, sa Politique de Securite, ses Voisins", Jeune Afrique May 14.

settlements alongside vulnerable communities, which were feeling the economic and social strain of this large influx of refugees".[22] For example, N'Gagam, located near the border with Nigeria, originally had a population of 1,000 but began accommodating around 13,500 refugees and IDPs fleeing Boko Haram attacks as of 2018.[23] To stem this tide, the NAF launched Operation INGAR (which means "shield" in Kanuri) in the Diffa region. The operation was designed to halt the northward advance of Boko Haram and protect the population in Diffa in particular. Niger's Minister of the Interior, Hassoumi Massaoudou, described INGAR as "the largest military operation ever mounted in Niger" to face the most urgent problem at that time.[24] Operation INGAR placed the police, gendarmerie, national guard, and military operating in the Diffa region under one command. Despite the remoteness of the Diffa region, Niger was able to halt Boko Haram's advance into the country through a dedicated, well-organised, and long-term operation.

Beginning in 2015, terrorist groups started to become very active along Niger's borders with Libya and Mali. To counter these terrorists' threats in the region, many multinational operations were conducted. Prominent among them is "Operation GOUGOUA" which was conducted by the Armed Forces of Niger, Chad, and France in the area bordering Libya in order to cut the flow of arms and drugs in the zone. In the West, along the border with Mali, "Operation ZARMAGANDA" continues to counter the activities of MUJAO. In the South-East, BH activities continue to increase and several attacks on NAF positions and villages along the border with Nigeria have been recorded. To free the zone from this terrorist menace, in addition to "Operation N'GAA", "Operation MAIDOUNAMA" was conducted by the armed forces of Chad and Niger to deny BH the ability to establish a safe haven along the border with Nigeria. During this operation, more than 300 BH members were killed and 600 were arrested, mostly by Nigerien and

[22] L Touchard, "Le Niger, sa Politique de Securite, ses Voisins", Jeune Afrique May 14.

[23] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2017). "Niger: 'We Must Tackle the Root Causes of the Crisis' - UN Humanitarian Chief," 11 September, https://www.unocha.org/story/niger-we-must-tackle-root-causes-crisis-un-humanitarian-chief (accessed 24 August 2020).

[24] Africa 24, *LE TALK - Hassoumi MASSAOUDOU*, accessed 24 August 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC0Rmo80RQA.

Chadian Special Forces. Furthermore, Nigerien troops, in cooperation with the Chadian armed forces, have been carrying out multiple cross-border offensives into Nigeria to prevent Boko Haram from establishing bases in the Nigeria-Niger border region.

At the regional level, with the exception of Cameroon, member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) created a Multinational Joint Security Force in 1998 to combat cross-border banditry and other crimes.[25] At inception, the operation of the multinational security outfit remained limited to infrequent and insignificant patrols on the shores of Lake Chad. Overall, the joint security force was ineffective in achieving genuine improvement in the overall security situation because Cameroon did not participate, given a border conflict with Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsula. This dispute made Cameroon reluctant to cooperate with Nigerian forces and the patrols were halted in 2000.[26] In reality, the security cooperation between the states to counter Boko Haram was very weak until the Paris summit of 2014, when key countries agreed about common security issues and regional interests and the MNJTF appeared as the only instrument available to support these interests.

The intractability of the Boko Haram insurgency compelled the LCBC member states and Benin to reactivate the Multinational Joint Security Force on 7 October 2014. In order to fill the gap left by the regional malaise of the past decade, the Force was rebranded as the "Multinational Joint Task Force" (MNJTF). Although the MNJTF was created under the leadership of the LCBC, only 4 of the 6 member states—Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria—constituted the joint military force along with

[25] Tchioffo Kodjo, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Regional and International Efforts to Combat the Boko Haram Terrorist Group and the Way Forward-African Union - Peace and Security Department," African Union,Peace and Security Department, accessed 24 August 2020, http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/report-of-the-chairperson-of-the-commission-on-regional-and-international-efforts-to-combat-the-boko-haram-terrorist-group-and-the-way-forward Also see, African Union, (2015). "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Regional and International Efforts to Combat the Boko Haram Terrorist Group and the Way Forward-African Union - Peace and Security Department," African Union, Peace and Security Department, https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-484-rpt-boko-haram-29-1-2015.pdf (accessed 24 August 2020).

[26] International Court of Justice. "Land and Maritime Boundary Between Cameroon and Nigeria, Judgement of 10 October 2002."

Benin, which is no longer a member of the LCBC.[27] The MNJTF became a coalition of states united around the goal of defeating Boko Haram.

At their 469th meeting on 25 November2014, the African Union's Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) fully endorsed the MNJTF's activation. However, it was not until it's 484th meeting, held in January 2015, that the AUPSC authorised the creation of a MNJTF force strength of up to 7,500 military personnel, which it later increased to 10,000. The MNJTF differed from classic AU peace support missions in a few critical ways. Most notably, the troops of the MNJTF primarily operated in their own country with some arrangements for cross-border operations. Furthermore, the financial agreements between the regional states were unique and mandated that contributing countries cover a large share of their own operational expenses. The member countries established three components to the MNJTF—military, police, and civilian. To achieve its objective, the MNJTF has been receiving financial and training support from the European Union.[28] Additionally, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom had a role in providing technical assistance to the MNJTF and regional states to effectively implement the counter-terrorism initiative in the Lake Chad region.

The transformation of the LCBC from its initial mandate to a counter Boko Haram mission received considerable scepticism because the organisation had not handled a crisis of such magnitude in the past. The LCBC's initial mission was development and environmental policy in the Lake Chad Basin region. Assanvo points out that, although its mandate allows it to carry out and sustain security operations, the LCBC has very narrow and limited experience as a military organisation.[29] Consequently, it was necessary to provide specialised and multidimensional support, especially in the area of logistics, to the MNJTF to improve its effectiveness as a counter Boko Haram force. In addition to the United States, France,

[27] Tchioffo Kodjo, "Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Regional and International Efforts to Combat the Boko Haram Terrorist Group and the Way Forward-African Union - Peace and Security Department," African Union, Peace and Security Department.

[28] United Nations. "Security Council Presidential Statement Encourages Further Progress in Addressing Challenges to Stability, Development of Sahel Region | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," accessed 24 August 2020, https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12147.doc.htm.

[29] Mahmood and Ani, "Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods."

the United Kingdom, and the European Union, the African Union (AU) also became an essential partner by offering technical assistance and coordinating partner support. The AU hosted several international donor conferences, including one in Oslo on 24 February 2017, which focused on tackling the unfolding human crisis in the Lake Chad basin.[30]

Beginning in 2015, the MNJTF deployed in 4 sectors. Sector 1, headquartered in Mora (Cameroon), covers a large part of the area of the 4th Joint Military Region of Cameroon, including the departments of Logone et Chari, Mayo Sava and Mayo Tsanaga. Sector 2, headquartered in Bagasola (Chad), covers a large part of the area of the 4th Military Region of Chad. Sector 3, headquartered in Monguno (Nigeria), covers a part of the area of the 7th Division in northeastern Nigeria, which includes Gubio, Mobbar, Abadam, Guzamala, Kukawa, Monguno, Marte, Baga, Ngala, Kalabalge, and Dikwa. This area remains the epicentre of Boko Haram insurgency fuelled by religious extremism. Sector 4, headquartered in Diffa (Niger), covers a large part of the area of the 5th Military Region of Niger, including Maine-Soroa, Diffa, Bosso, and Nguigmi.[31] Since setting up its operations, the MNJTF has had a fair level of success in countering Boko Haram. However, there have been some disconcerting moments for the MNJTF, like the Bosso Massacre. The attack by BH elements on the Nigerien border town of Bosso left scores dead and thousands displaced. The massacre was catalysed by poor planning and a lack of coordination between the regional states.[32]

In response to the Bosso Massacre, the MNJTF initiated Operation GAMA AIKI in June 2016, its first comprehensive multilateral campaign. GAMA, AIKI's priority area of operation, was a 10-km-wide band of land 65 km long along the border between Niger and Nigeria, around Damasak and Malam-Fatori. It was the first time that Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria worked together on a common operation under a single command and control. Its mission was to destroy Boko

[30] Tor Ingar Oesterud, "Donor Conference in Oslo for Nigeria and Lake Chad Region on 24 February," *Norway Today* (blog), January 18, 2017, accessed 24 August 2020, http://norwaytoday.info/news/donor-conference-oslo-nigeria-lake-chad-region-24-february.

[31] Strategic Directive for MNJTF Operations.

[32] Omar S Mahmood and Ndubuisi Christian Ani, "Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram." Institute for Security Studies, July 2018.

Haram's last strongholds in the Damasak area.[33] Operation GAMA AIKI took place through August 2016. The operation's main effort focused on disrupting Boko Haram's leadership and logistical organisation and preventing fuel and small arms smuggling. Ultimately, Operation GAMA AIKI succeeded in destroying insurgent assets in the Metele and Garere areas and completely took Boko Haram by surprise, forcing the terror group to reassess its strategy.

Operation GAMA AIKI 2, launched in January 2017, also known as Operation RUWAN KADA, continued the success of Operation GAMA AIKI. It contained air strikes and amphibious operations to clear Boko Haram's strongholds within the Lake Chad islands. Discussions with regional MNJTF officers reveal that the six week-long bombing campaign disrupted the Boko Haram logistics network, killed scores of Boko Haram terrorists, and freed hundreds of hostages. Despite these continued MNJTF efforts, Boko Haram continued to launch attacks into Niger. For example, between 3 and 6 June 2016 in the town of Bosso, Niger, Boko Haram killed 32 soldiers, 30 from Niger and 2 from Nigeria, most of whom were in the process of building a bridge on the Komadugu River between Niger and Nigeria. The efforts of the MNJTF also failed to stop the spread of Boko Haram in Lake Chad and its islands.[34] Despite these setbacks, the threat posed by Boko Haram certified the importance of the MNJTF as a more applicable and effective tool for fighting terrorism at the regional level.

International support has proven crucial in supporting Sahelian counterterrorism operations. The U.S.' engagement in the Sahel and Niger, for instance, is through the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), and United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). The aforementioned initiatives' objective is to prepare the Sahelian forces to use military means to confront terrorist groups. These U.S. programmes have included training as well as equipment, and have been supporting Sahelian and Nigerien forces for over two decades.

[33] Conflict Armament Research. "Investigating Cross-Border Weapon Transfers in the Sahel" accessed 24 August 2020, http://www.conflictarm.com/reports/investigating-cross-border-weapon-transfers-in-the-sahel/.

[34] "Boko Haram Attack in Niger 'Kills 32 Soldiers,'" accessed October 12, 2018, accessed 24 August 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/boko-haram-attack-niger-kills-32-soldiers-nigeria-160604125912477.html.

In 2002, the United States introduced its first counterterrorist programme in the region, the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI). The programme aimed to improve the intelligence and border security capability of several of the Sahelian countries. The programme scored its first big success in 2004 when, with U.S. intelligence assistance, GSPC elements were chased from Mali by that government's forces and captured and killed by Chadian forces. The United States has since moved to create a much larger programme, the Trans- Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), which involves economic, political, and public diplomacy as well as military components. Notably, the United States European Command (EUCOM), at the time, also took the lead in successfully bringing together both North African and Sahelian African states in more robust intelligence and other counterterrorism programmes. The United States has also stepped-up joint exercises in the region, for example, Operation Flintlock, which has been a yearly event, involving a sizable number of U.S. Special Forces.

With regards to the travails in Niger and Mali, they seem to fuel a resumption of rebellion among the northern groups with whom peace accords were critical to their democratic future. In 2005, Niger and Mali, with U.S. assistance, restored a military presence in the desert regions of their countries, areas that had been demilitarised in the mid-1990s, as part of the overall political settlements at that time. In response, Tuaregs in Malian rebelled near the Algerian border in May–June 2006. The subsequent Algiers Peace Accord in 2006 between the government of Mali and the Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC) included removing some of the army units along the main smuggling routes. But the Taureg rebellion broke out once again in Mali in August 2007, demonstrating the fragility of such agreements. Niger experienced a similar rebellion in February 2007, when rebels, fighting the government's accusations of drug trafficking and banditry, championed claims for more investment in their region. The mix of crime, discrimination, poverty, and limited governmental capacity were rampant and undoubtedly a challenge and no easy challenge for any security programme, including for the TSCTI. These fault lines, contributed in no small part, to the deepening of extremism in the region.

Despite these hurdles, the United States continues to constructively engage with Nigerien and Sahelian countries. For instance, the United States is building a $110-m base for armed drones near Agadez in the

country's desert centre.[35] According to the U.S. military, it is the largest construction project the U.S. air force has ever undertaken on its own. The United States is also building a new embassy, signalling its commitment to the country and region. It must be noted, however, that a large percentage of the U.S. efforts in Niger were logistics and support related, rather than boots-on-the-ground in combat roles. U.S. military personnel in Niger are almost entirely involved in the training of the Niger military and the maintenance of drone bases for surveillance purposes. Hence, U.S. forces in Niger are small in number and do not have a combat role. The priority for the U.S. is security. It scaled back direct tactical assistance in Niger after 9 soldiers, including 4 of their own, were killed in a 2017 ambush by ISIS-linked jihadi fighters. It is however important to note that following Washington's rejection of the July 2023 military coup in Niger, the military administration called for a cessation of U.S. military presence in its territory.

Concerning regional responses, the transnational nature of the extremist groups prompted five Sahel countries- Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Chad-to form the G5 Sahel Force in 2014. This force has the freedom to cross each other's borders in pursuit of terrorists. The eventual hope is that the force will have 5,000 troops. However, the force faced funding and equipment shortages and its former headquarter in central Mali was bombed, forcing it to move to Bamako.

In terms of security measures, the creation and the deployment of the Sahel Joint Force (JF) represent the most visible achievements by the Sahel G5 organisation. The JF, headquartered in Mali, patrols the borders but it lacks sufficient means to be fully operational. In 2017, the G5 Sahel Heads of State officially launched the *G5 Sahel Joint Force* in Bamako. It was officially created by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2359 of 21 June 2017, which was sponsored by France and endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Committee (AUPSC). The Joint Force is tasked with the pooling of efforts in the fight against terrorism, cross-border organised crime and human trafficking. It carried out its first operation in November 2017 with the armies of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. At full operational capability, the Joint Force will have 5,000 soldiers (7 regiments spread across three zones: West, Centre, and East). It is active in a 50-km strip on either side of the countries' shared

[35] Van da Felbab-Brown, "In the eye of the storm: Niger and its unstable neighbours; *Foreign Policy Centre*, Tues, June 13, 2017.

borders. The Force has already carried out about 17 successful joint operations. The G5 Sahel force has however collapsed following diplomatic pressures that accompanied the resurgence of military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.[36]

There is also the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). While the MINUSMA was a mission to provide stability in Mali, it also has a component dedicated to Niger. This component assisted the Nigerien government with training, strategic advice and equipment, for its internal security forces, in their fight against terrorist groups.

Furthermore, there was the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel (P3S). This initiative, led by France and Germany, was presented at the Biarritz G7 Summit in France. The P3S aims to support efforts to redeploy government services and administration, particularly internal security forces, and to strengthen the criminal justice system in Sahel countries. It also facilitated coordination between the major partners in the region. The P3S initially focused on the G5 Sahel countries and existing cross-border initiatives, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Accra Initiative.

Following this trend of transnational cooperation, the International Coalition for the Sahel was launched by the Heads of State of France, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger on 13 January 2020, during the Pau Summit in France. This was in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General, the President of the European Council, the European Union High Representative, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. This initiative was due essentially to the gravity of the crisis in the Sahel, the sense of urgency, and the volume of the needs, which require stronger, more inclusive action.

The International Coalition for the Sahel aims to provide a collective response to the challenges of the Sahel region by pooling the work undertaken by the G5 Sahel States and their international partners. The goal is to take coherent action across the Sahel by including all relevant levers and stakeholders, whether dealing with the issues of security, politics, or development. The initiative follows recent requests by Niger, asking for the creation of an international coalition along the lines of the one set up in the Middle East to fight against the Islamic State. Prior to its

[36] UN Security Council Report, May 2020.

forced exit from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, France which posed as the former colonial power and a leading partner in the Sahel, called for greater contribution from several European countries to support counterterrorism engagements in the Sahel. The initiative has however been questioned in several quarters. Some question whether there is enough in the agreement to challenge the dynamics of armed Islamist groups which are establishing local capabilities to conduct ever more brazen and possibly successful attacks against the armies of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and against the UN peacekeepers and the French units assigned to the counterterrorism Barkhane campaign. These attacks have resulted in hundreds of soldiers being killed. The affected countries are justifiably worried that the increasing casualty toll was the result of the inadequacy of their own armed and police forces. However, the six heads of state meeting at Pau agreed to address this problem by defining a new framework for how their armies will be deployed in the fight against terrorism. The formal name of the new framework is the "Coalition for the Sahel", which was anticipated to ultimately result in the creation of a new joint military command.

Furthermore, there also exist various frameworks, resolutions, and declarations at the strategic level to address the ongoing terrorism challenges in Niger. For instance, at a summit on 21 December, 2019, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a 2020–2024 action plan to eradicate terrorism in the region and pledged to mobilise $1 billion internally. The African Union—Lake Chad Basin Commission Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin was also another regional initiative that set the parameters for early warning and early engagement on all forms of local conflicts.[37]

Resilience of Terrorist Groups in Niger

In spite of all these regional and multinational efforts, Niger continues to experience increases in terrorist attacks. Some of these attacks have become more sophisticated and the terrorists seem to be expanding into new territories. This was observed in 2020, when within the space of two months, terrorist's attacks left 174 Nigerien soldiers dead. The

[37] AFP, Reuters, Sept, 2019.

Islamic State-linked group claimed responsibility for the attacks considered to be the deadliest on Nigerien soldiers in history; and resulted to the sack of the Niger Chief of Army Staff by the former President Mohamed Bazoum. Yet, although these groups have adopted the branding of international terrorist organisations like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, they're extremely local organisations.

As it turns out, these local terrorist groups motivated by local grievances have come to adopt the Islamic State branding. These groups are thriving in Niger's border areas (shared with Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso) where there is either a weak national government or no government at all, allowing local conflicts to arise which can be easily exploited. At the same time, the Islamic State has also been using ideology to bridge different ethnic groups, convincing them to fight for Islam rather than over smaller tribal conflicts. While in some cases, these terrorist groups provide protection and social services to marginalised communities in these areas in the absence of the government.

It should also be noted that a large percentage of the Nigerien society depend largely on agriculture, fishing, and livestock rearing. Persistent droughts over the years (as a result of climate change) are threatening their way of life. This has brought about severe hardship, especially for the young and able bodied who cannot find jobs. Their only solution for a livelihood is to resort to illegal activities including terrorism. These despondent youths, ultimately form the "foot soldiers" for the terrorist groups.

The resilience of these terrorist groups can also be analysed by understanding the fault lines inherent in the ethnic groups and communes in Niger's fringe or border regions (particularly with Mali). Here, we see that communes have lost hundreds of women, children and the elderly who were victims to the blunders of agents of the Malian and Nigerien States, of the abuses of the Tuareg militias supported by these same States, but also the behaviour of the French army. It is this state of affairs that has prompted many young people to listen to calls from jihadi fighters to join their ranks.

From the outset, it was feelings of frustration and injustice that prompted the young men in these communes to create a Fulani militia along the Nigerien-Malian border to start hostilities with the State of Niger, which was not able to protect them following perceived abuses that they had been subjected to. Additionally, some members of this Fulani militia went to join the Movement for the Unity of Jihad in West Africa

(MUJAO) to repel the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), not to do jihad but to fight the MNLA. Contradictions like these and the apparent improper handling of the situation by the authorities, exacerbates the already tenuous situation and ultimately empowers terrorist groups there.

In February and November 2013, a series of clashes between the Fulani community and the "Imghad" led to the death of hundreds of Nigeriens. Following these clashes, young Peuls were arrested before being transported to Niamey. They were later accused of terrorist acts, when it was apparently a conflict between them and the "Imghad." The frustration generated from such incidents, also pushed young Peuls to join Al Sahrawi, whom they now consider as "Messiahs". In the end, the combination of poverty, the contradictions of the internal dynamics of the Nigerien State, weak state presence, and under-resourced Nigerien security forces have allowed terrorist groups, criminal networks, and ethnic armed groups to thrive in Niger, thereby undermining national, regional, and international counterterrorism efforts.

Conclusion

Terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to peace and security in Africa. The continent continues to pay a heavy price for terrorist activity, which has resulted in mass casualties, destruction of infrastructure, loss of livelihoods and displacements. Terrorist groups are becoming increasingly bold in their activities and attacks. AQIM's and other terrorist groups' continuing operations in the Sahelo-Saharan region, Boko Haram's widening scope of activity, and the continuing atrocities and destabilisation activities of the LRA and Al-Shabaab are all alarming indicators of the level of threat facing the continent. The recent killings in Diffa and Bosso region of Niger by Boko Haram, has raised serious concerns about the activities of terrorists, not just in Africa or the Sahel region but in Niger too.

The terrorist groups active in Niger include the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS), Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa (ISIS-WA), and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), the group that formed after the Sahara Branch of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Mourabitoun, Ansar al-Dine, and the Macina Liberation Front, which came together in 2017. It has also been observed that terrorists freely cross many of Niger's borders. In the

southeast, Boko Haram and ISIS-WA have profited from porous borders with Chad and Nigeria to attack civilian and security targets in Niger's Diffa region. Al-Qaeda (AQ) and ISIS affiliates have transited the Mali and Burkina Faso borders in the west to attack security targets in the Tillaberi region and crossed the Libyan and, to a lesser extent, the Algerian borders in the Agadez region in the north. It has also been the case that terrorists, weapons, and contraband items seem to transit freely through the vast northern part of Niger.

Niger remains a strong opponent of terrorism in the region, and has continued to cooperate with international partners, and received substantial international counterterrorism assistance. Niger is working assiduously to operationalize the Central Sector Command Post in Niamey for the G5 Sahel Joint Force. At the same time, Niger is conducting joint patrols with Chad and Nigeria as part of its increased cooperation with Lake Chad Basin Commission member countries in the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS-WA. Furthermore, Niger has increased its number of border control facilities and is working with the international community to construct and equip these facilities. Despite these laudable efforts, the terrorism problem continues to persist.

Counterterrorism in the Sahel requires sustained operational effort to enhance the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism. Weaknesses in border management and control are evident in Niger and these require that efforts need to be redoubled with the view of strengthening Niger's capacity to effectively police and control its borders, to curb illegal crossing of terrorist elements, illicit arms and goods, and eradicate terrorist safe-havens. Special attention should be directed towards providing the institutions involved in border control and management in Niger with requisite human resources, training, and equipment.

Countering radicalisation and violent extremism lies at the heart of the efforts to address conditions that are conducive to the spread of terrorism. It is a long-term process that requires the development of sound national policies and programmes. Hence the need for Niger to pursue even more vigorously, its counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation policies and programmes, which will include; closer engagement with the media, civil society organisations, notably community leaders, religious authorities, women-who can play a crucial role at family and community level-and victims of terrorism, and formal and informal educational institutions. This will work best in conjunction with legislative reforms, prison rehabilitation programmes, and building the national capacity of defence and

security agencies including institutions of civil administration to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of related measures.

In order to counter radicalisation and violent extremism and to reduce vulnerability to extremist ideology it is also important for Niger to address issues such as poverty, deprivation and marginalisation, which provide a breeding ground to terrorism. In this respect, particular attention needs to be paid to the education and employment of the youth. Equally important is the need to rehabilitate communities (especially in its border areas) affected by terrorist acts and promote social cohesion, including preventing revenge killings and inter-communal violence, which perpetuate instability and exacerbate extremism.

Finally, and importantly, many terrorist groups ally with larger organisations like Islamic State, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab not necessarily because they believe in their ideology, but because they possess the strongest, relative organisational structure and, thus, represent the best conduit for these groups to achieve their separate objectives. Alternatively, these groups risk being co-opted by the larger organisation and its ideology that they believe they can restrain and control. During a time in which advances in communication, economic integration, and political solidarity find many nations around the world connected through a closely-knit network, both the emerging and persistent terrorist threats to the security of the Sahel constitute a threat to all of Niger. In consideration of the analyses presented in this paper, Niger's policymakers and citizens must seriously consider these terrorist threats and work in conjunction with other nations to devise effective solutions to mitigate the problem.

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CHAPTER 26

Anatomy of Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

Freedom Chukwudi Onuoha

Introduction

Nigeria is located in West Africa and situated between the Gulf of Guinea in the south and the Sahel Savannah in the north. The total area covered by Nigeria is 923,768 sqkm comprising 910,768 sqkm of land and 13,000 sqkm of water.[1] Its total land boundaries are estimated at 4,477 km shared as follows with neighbouring countries; Benin 809 km, Cameroon 1975 km, Chad 85 km, Niger 1608 km, and a total coastline of 853 km.[2] In addition, Nigeria has a maritime claim of 12 nautical miles of territorial sea and an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles with a continental shelf of 200 m depth.[3]

[1] Nigeria Geography 2020, accessed 1 December 2021,http://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/nigeria/nigeria_geography.html.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

F. C. Onuoha (✉)
Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria
e-mail: freedom.onuoha@unn.edu.ng

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Endowed with huge natural and human resources, Nigeria has the potential to preserve stability within its territory as well as contribute to international peace and security. However, the episodic outbreak of violence significantly deflates its internal security composure and global stature. Especially since the return to democracy in May 1999, Nigeria has been battling multiple security challenges such as ethno-religious violence, militancy, insurgency, herdsmen-farmers clashes, terrorism, cattle rustling, secessionist agitations, kidnapping, and sea piracy, among others.[4] Violence by armed groups has become the most significant challenge to peace and security in Africa's most populous country. For instance, some 1,416 Nigerians were killed in violent attacks across the country in the first quarter of 2020 alone.[5] The Global Terrorism Index published by the Institute of Economics and Peace in February 2024 ranked Nigeria as the 8th terrorism most affected country in the world with an estimated data of 11,299 deaths from terrorism since 2007.[6] For the most part, the death toll and the scale of destruction associated with violent extremism and mass killings have been grossly under-reported.

Although the spread, frequency, and intensity of violence perpetrated by armed groups differ from place to place and over time, the sustenance of violent attacks by Boko Haram Terrorists (BHT) has resulted in monumental human and material devastation in Nigeria's northeast zone and the Lake Chad region. Reference to BHT in this chapter encapsulates militants belonging to any of the three main factions of the Boko Haram, namely the *Jama'atu Ahlus Sunna Lidda'wati Wal Jihad* (JAS), *Ansaru al-Musulmina fi Bilad al-Sudan* (Ansaru), and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP).[7] Since the group waged a short-lived revolt

[4] Freedom Onuoha, (2019). "The Nigerian project and the Quest for Sustainable National Security" in O.O. Oshita, I.M. Alumona. and F.C Onuoha, (eds) *Internal Security Management in Nigeria: Perspectives, Challenges, and Lessons*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

[5] G. Onyedinefu, (2020). Nigeria Mourns Archives Names of Over 1,416 Nigerians Killed by Bandits, Terrorists in 2020. *Global Sentinel*, May 29, https://globalsentinelng.com/2020/05/29/nigeriamourns-archives-names-of-over-1416-nigerians-killed-by-bandits-terrorists-since-2020/.

[6] Institute of Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index" 2024, https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GTI-2024-web-290224.pdf (accessed 16 December 2024).

[7] Despite the different factions and names, "Boko Haram" is used most conveniently to collectively refer to the various factions, particularly when there was confusion as to

in July 2009, its operations top the list of Nigeria's security threat profile. As clearly recognised in the National Security Strategy:

> The threat of terrorism and violent extremism has continued to challenge our security forces over the last decade. The splintering of BHT into two factions has compounded the complexity of the threat environment. The objective of the factions is to undermine the public trust in government. This is in consonance with the rise in global terrorism as a strategic threat with significant increase of its logistical, financial and operational capabilities.[8]

Attacks by the BHT have claimed at least 37,000 lives, displaced more than 2.6 million people, and caused about $9 billion worth of damage in Nigeria since 2009.[9] The Nigerian government has consequently embarked on sustained counterinsurgency (COIN) operations to counter the evolving threat. The modest military success recorded in 2015 encouraged President Mohammadu Buhari to claim that the group has been "technically" defeated.[10] Yet audacious attacks by the BHT have persisted at worst, or only declined at best.

This chapter examines the Boko Haram threat in Nigeria. The focus on Boko Haram is informed by the fact that it is the only violent group in Nigeria that has been officially designated as a terrorist organisation by the Nigerian government, the United Nations, and foreign powers such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, among others. The chapter focuses on the evolution, operations, splintering, and trends in the BHT trajectory.

which group was responsible for an attack. See https://www.britannica.com/topic/Boko-Haram.

[8] Office of the National Security Adviser - ONSA (2019). *National Security Strategy*. Abuja: ONSA, p. 8.

[9] F.C Onuoha and S. Oyewole, (2018) Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria. Doha: Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.

[10] BBC (2015), "Nigeria Boko Haram: Militants 'technically defeated' – Buhari", 24 December, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35173618.

Background and Context

The actual date of the emergence of Boko Haram is a source of debate in the literature. The origin of Boko Haram dates back to the early 1990s, but its influence began to grow steadily from 2002 when Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic preacher, became its leader. Its goal was to overthrow the Nigerian state and establish an Islamic state. Boko Haram, which literally translates to "Western education is forbidden", opposes Nigeria's secular government and western-style institutions such as schools, universities, and civil service.

Boko Haram members are motivated by the conviction that the Nigerian state is a cesspit of social vices, thus "the best thing for a devout Muslim to do was to 'migrate' from the morally bankrupt society to a secluded place and establish an ideal Islamic society devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation".[11] Non-members were therefore considered as *kuffar* (disbelievers; those who deny the truth) or *fasiqun* (wrong-doers). Although some Chadians, Cameroonians, and Nigerians were part of the group's early members, an estimated eighty per cent of its members are believed to be of the Kanuri tribe.

The group attracted worldwide attention in July 2009 following a short-lived revolt in northern Nigeria. The five-day confrontation resulted in the death of over 800 people, mostly its members. It ended when the military captured the group's leader, Mohammed Yusuf, and handed him over to the police. Yusuf was later killed extra-judicially in police custody.[12] In the aftermath of the July revolt, the group went underground and later adopted Yusuf's hard-line deputy, Abubakar Shekau, as their new spiritual leader. Thereafter, the militants referred to themselves as the *Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad*, meaning a "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad". Since then, the evolutionary trajectory of BHT since then has been characterised by internal revolt and factionalisation amidst continuity in the perpetration of extreme violence in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region.

[11] O Akanji, (2009) The politics of combating domestic terrorism in Nigeria. In: W Okumu, and A. Botha, (eds.), Domestic terrorism in Africa: defining, addressing and understanding its impact on human security, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, p. 60.

[12] F.C Onuoha, (2010), 'The Islamist challenge: Nigeria's Boko Haram Crisis Explained, *African Security Review*, 19(2): 54–67.

Evolution of Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

Boko Haram remains a somewhat resilient creation, splintering into multiple factions after Yusuf's death. To date, three main factions have their roots in the original Boko Haram led by Yusuf. Their evolution, core ideology, operations, and dynamics are discussed subsequently.

Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad

Following Yusuf's death during the July 2009 revolt, Shekau moved quickly to consolidate on *Salafi Jihadi* ideology of the group while propagating *Takfirism*. The ideology of *Salafism* seeks to purge Islam of outside influences and strives for a return to the Islam practiced by the "pious ancestors", that is Muhammad and the early Islamic community. *Salafist Jihadism* is the specific interpretation of *Salafism* which extols the use of violence to bring about such radical change.[13] Adding to the *Salafi Jihadi* ideological strain is *Takfirism*, which classifies all non-practicing Muslims as *kafirs* (infidels) and calls upon its adherents to abandon existing Muslim societies, settle in isolated communities and fight all Muslim infidels.[14]

Under Shekau's brutal leadership, Boko Haram became more violent, adopting the strategy of terrorism and insurgency from 2010. It draws its fighters mainly from the Kanuri ethnic group and is composed of around 9,000 fighters, according to 2015 CIA estimates.[15] They established safe havens in the Lake Chad border region which host a complex terrain of deep forest, lakes, islands, and caves. The *Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad (JAS)* has sustained a deadly insurgency that overwhelmingly targeted civilians in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States in Nigeria's Northeast region, although the group has equally mounted attacks in other states (see Fig. 26.1). Shekau's approval of the indiscriminate killing of civilians led some disgruntled members to splinter from the group to form the Ansaru in 2012.

[13] European Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, (2008), "Radicalisation Processes Leading to Acts of Terrorism", A Concise Report submitted to the European Commission, 15 May, p. 6.

[14] H. Mneimneh, (2009) 'Takfirism', Critical Threats, 1 October, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/takfirism.

[15] BBC News, (2015) "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists? 4 May http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501.

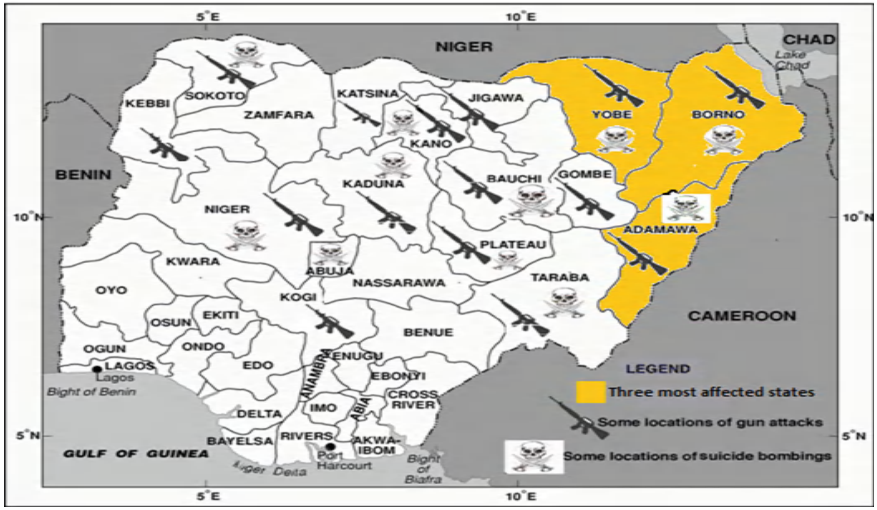

Fig. 26.1 Map of Nigeria showing Boko Haram Stronghold and Vulnerable States (*Source* Author's Elaboration 2021)

In April 2014, Boko Haram drew international condemnation after it kidnapped 276 girls from their school in the town of Chibok, Borno State. It subsequently started seizing towns and villages in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, proclaiming a caliphate in August 2014. On account of its brutal attacks, Boko Haram emerged as the world's deadliest terrorist organisation in 2014.[16] By early January 2015, the insurgents had emerged as a serious regional security threat to the Lake Chad region, following the staging of cross-border attacks on Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. A renewed military operation by Nigerian and regional forces helped to turn the tide against the group. The Boko Haram became badly degraded and mostly resorted to asymmetric tactics such as suicide bombings. Between April 2011 and June 2017, the group was responsible for a total of 238 suicide bombings in the four Lake Chad countries—Nigeria (208); Cameroon (22); Chad (5); and Niger (3).[17]

In March 2015, Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, rebranding the group as the ISWAP. In 2016, the group experienced a major fracture, with Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the son of the group's original leader, Yusuf, leading a majority of the militants under ISWAP while Shekau remained the head of the JAS faction or Boko Haram. His faction is very dominant in the Southern Borno and the Mandara mountain areas covering parts of Nigeria and Cameroon, with a branch outpost in the Lake Chad area between Tumur in the Niger Republic and Kangar in Northern Borno.

Ansaru al-Musulmina fi Bilad al-Sudan (Ansaru).

The Ansaru, which roughly translates as "Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa", was founded shortly after the 20 January 2012 Boko Haram attack in Kano that killed at least 180 people, mostly Muslims. On 2 June 2012, its self-identified leader, Abu Usamatul al-Ansari, released a video proclaiming the creation of the group and outlining its doctrines. Abu Usamatul al-Ansari was a pseudonym for a former Boko Haram commander, Khalid al-Barnawi, who received jihadi training from Al-Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

[16] Institute for Economics and Peace (2010), *Global Terrorism Index 2015: Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism.* Brussels, IEP.

[17] ADF Staff (2018). Battling Boko Haram: Nigerian and regional efforts helped turn the tide against the insurgent group. Africa Defence Forum, 11(1), p. 8–15.

in Algeria in the mid-2000s.[18] Khalid al-Barnawi was among the three leaders of Boko Haram designated as "global terrorists" by the US State Department on 21 June 2012. The other two leaders were Abubakar Shekau and Abubakar Adam Kambar.[19] Very little is known about Ansaru's command structure, funding streams, recruitment tactics, or the number of fighters at its disposal. It boasts of a smaller fighting force, hovering around 300 to 500 members.

Unlike JAS, a force composed largely of Kanuris, the Ansaru draws from diverse ethnic groups, but most of its core members were Hausas and Fulanis. It operates mainly in the northwest zone of Nigeria with light footprints in Niger republic. Although it shares in *Salafist ideology*, the Ansaru:

> Considers anybody that accepted the *khalimatush shahada* (believing in one God and Prophet Muhammad as the messenger of Allah) as a Muslim who must not be killed except he/she has committed an act that is punishable by death as stated in the holy Qur'ran. Islam forbids killing of innocent people including non-Muslims. This is our belief and we stand for it.[20]

Thus, Ansaru's understanding of Jihad in Islam is different from that of JAS that claims to be engaged in Jihad for the sake of Allah.[21] While Shekau's JAS faction considers every non-Muslim including Christians as enemies that should be killed, the Ansaru abhors the killing of innocent non-Muslims except in cases of self-defence. Hence Nigerian security forces and foreigners (Westerners) constitute Ansaru's main targets. Its first major attack on 26 November 2012 involved a raid of the Special Anti-robbery Squad detention centre at Nigeria's capital city, Abuja, to free its members and other detainees.

Ansaru's second attack was the kidnapping of Francis Colump, a French citizen working for the French company, Vergnet, in Katsina State

[18] F.C Onuoha, (2013) "Jama'atu Ansarul Musilimina Fi Biladis Sudan: Nigeria's Evolving Terrorist Group". Doha: Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.

[19] J. Lobe (2012), 'Nigeria: Three Boko Haram leaders put on US terrorism list', *Inter Press Service*, 21 June, http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/06/nigeria-three-boko-haram-leaders-put-on-u-s-terrorism-list/.

[20] T. Mamu, (2012) "Another Islamic Sect emerges…to counter Boko Haram", *Desertherald*, 2 June, http://desertherald.com/?p=1526#more.

[21] S Shuaib, (2012) "New Group Emerges, Vows to Avenge Killing of Muslims", *Leadership*, 3 June.

in December 2012. However, the kidnapping of seven foreigners on 17 February 2013 by Ansaru was the biggest of its kind since the outbreak of terrorist violence in northern Nigeria. The group justified the abduction thus:

> Based on the transgression and atrocities done to the religion of Allah SWT by the European countries in many places such as Afghanistan and Mali, by Allah's grace, *Jama'atu Ansarul Musilimina Fi Biladissudan* have the custody of seven persons…. It is stressed that any attempt or act contrary to our condition by the European nations or by the Nigerian government will lead to the happenings as it was in the previous attempt.[22]

The phrase "previous attempt" is thought to be a reference to the killing of Franco Lamolinara (Italian) and Christopher Mcmanus (Briton) in Sokoto State, in March 2012, during a botched attempt by the Nigerian Forces and British Special Boat Squad to rescue them. Both hostages, who were working for an Italian construction firm, B Stabilini, in Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State, were taken hostage in March 2011. The Ansaru was later placed on the UK Proscribed Terror List on 23 November 2012, for the kidnapping and killing of these Europeans while operating under the name *al-Qa'ida in the Lands Beyond the Sahel*.[23]

The trend of Ansaru-claimed attacks from 2011 to 2013 further confirms it primarily operated around north-western Nigeria, such as in the states of Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Kano, Abuja, Kogi, and only later becoming prominent in Bauchi and even Sambisa in Borno.[24] The Ansaru has remained largely dormant from 2013 to its re-emergence in 2019 when it reemerged. Violent rivalry from JAS and successful counter-terrorism raids against its top leaders by Nigerian security forces greatly emasculated the group. For instance, state security service (SSS) operatives arrested its leader, Khalid al-Barnawi, in Lokoja, Kogi state, on 1 April 2016. The SSS described Mr. Al-Barnawi's capture as "a major milestone in the counterterrorism fight of this service". His presumed

[22] J. Ajani & S. Edeh, (2013) "Abduction of Foreigners: Security forces close in on kidnappers", *Vanguard*, 24 February.

[23] A. Abdulkadir, "Dead Hostages: Did AQIM kill McManus and Lamolinara? *Citizen Platform*, 10 March 2012.

[24] J. Zenn (2019) "The Return of al-Qaeda's Faction in Nigeria: What's Going on in Zamfara?", *Terrorism Monitor*, 17(6), https://jamestown.org/program/the-return-of-al-qaedas-faction-in-nigeria-whats-going-on-in-zamfara/.

second-in-command, Bello Danhajiya, was also arrested on 13 April.[25] Notwithstanding, remnants of Ansaru continue to operate independently from both JAS and ISWAP factions while maintaining links with Al-Qaeda affiliated jihadist groups in the Sahel such as the *Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wa al Muslimeen* (JNIM).

The Islamic State in West Africa Province

The emergence of the ISWAP faction came to the limelight in June 2016, when it was reported that Boko Haram had fractured internally with a large group splitting away from Shekau over his failure to adhere to guidance from ISIS.[26] On 2 August 2016, Islamic State nominated Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the new leader of ISWAP. He was previously the spokesman of Boko Haram under Shekau. Shortly after his nomination, al-Barnawi made a caustic rejection of Shekau's leadership, lambasting him for targeting ordinary Muslims and promising to concentrate attacks largely on Christians.

The designation infuriated Shekau, who released an audio message on 4 August insisting he is still the leader of Boko Haram and denouncing al-Barnawi as an infidel.[27] Shekau's outburst triggered a propaganda tirade between the two jihadi leaders. On 6 August, al-Barnawi's faction with the support of Mamman Nur, released an audio message denouncing Shekau as a hypocrite and coward. They claimed that Shekau was ousted because of various offences, including the killing of fellow Muslims, living in luxury while his fighters starved, and committing sacrileges that affected the sanctity of their jihadist campaign. Political analysts believe that Shekau and Nur have been locked in a factional feud, each sending audios behind-the-scenes to Islamic State condemning one another.[28]

[25] F. Nwabufo (2016) "DSS 'captures' Al-Barnawi's 'deputy', Danhajiya", *The Cable*, 13 April, https://www.thecable.ng/iran-iraq-behind-shiia-sect-says-dss-official.

[26] C. Gaffey, (2016) "Boko Haram Splinters with ISIS over Child Suicide Bombers: US General", Newsweek, 22 June, http://europe.newsweek.com/boko-haram-splinters-isis-over-child-suicide-bombers-us-general-473004.

[27] H. Idris, (2016) "Shekau Vs Barnawi: The Battle for Boko Haram's Soul", Daily Trust, 11 September, http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/news/shekau-vs-barnawi-the-battle-for-boko-haram-s-soul/162159.html#UgUegeToUOgohsBE.99.

[28] K. Adamu, (2016) "Security Risk Management and the Feud Amongst Salafi Jihadists in Nigeria", LinkedIn, 27 August, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/security-risk-management-feud-amongst-salafi-jihadists-kabir-adamu (accessed 1 September 2016).

As with past infighting, the schism was primarily driven by ideological and tactical differences between Shekau and those who oppose his *takfirist* approach to Islamic jihadism. Shekau had made his jihadi-ideological position clear:

> I am against the principle where someone will dwell in the society with the infidels without making public his opposition or anger against the infidels publicly as it is stated in the Qur'an. Anyone doing that can't be a Muslim, thick and thin. This is what our ideology proved and that is where I stand.[29]

Shekau's JAS, therefore, makes no distinction between Christians or Muslims. He has ordered and justified suicide bombings that have repeatedly targeted mosques, churches, markets, and bus stations, as well as intermittent raids that resulted in the killing, maiming, kidnapping, and displacement of thousands of civilians. Like the Ansaru, the ISWAP equally disagreed with Shekau's takfirist stance. In his critique of Shekau, Nur argued that: "in the Qur'an, Allah forbids Muslims from killing one another…and He also taught against killing in secret. If it is a serious punishment, it must be public for people to know and witness it. But once you see killings in secret, there is something fishy, and this is what we noticed with Shekau".[30]

Since then, ISWAP has sought to distinguish itself strategically and operationally from the Shekau-led JAS. This may have led some Ansaru members to reintegrate into ISWAP and helped militarily defeat Shekau-loyal fighters in 2016.[31] The U.S. Department of Defence estimated in April 2018 that ISWAP had about 3,500 fighters. The ISWAP operates largely in northern parts of Borno and the islands in the Lake Chad area covering Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad, running state-like structures in the communities they occupy.[32] This has enabled it to establish a largely symbiotic relationship with the inhabitants of the Lake Chad area.

[29] H. Idris, (2016) "Shekau Vs Barnawi: The Battle for Boko Haram's Soul".

[30] Ibid.

[31] J. Zenn (2019) "Boko Haram Faction Releases Book on History and Ideology", blogpost, 9 August, https://www.cfr.org/blog/boko-haram-faction-releases-book-history-and-ideology.

[32] M. Samuel, (2019) "Economics of terrorism in Lake Chad Basin", *ISS Today*, 10 July, https://issafrica.org/amp/iss-today/economics-of-terrorism-in-lake-chad-basin.

The ISWAP focuses mainly on attacking military and government targets. The group has attempted to avoid targeting Muslims although it has carried out attacks on civilians, including executing captured humanitarian actors and Christians. Its attacks in Nigeria are too numerous to recount in full, but there are a few ones worth examining. In February 2018, the group abducted 110 schoolgirls in Dapchi; and inn March, it kidnapped three aid workers during an attack that killed dozens of other people. On 18 November 2018, the group attacked an army base in the village Metele, in northeastern Borno state, Nigeria, killing over 100 Nigerian soldiers. In June 2019, the group attacked two military bases in the towns of Marte and Kirenowa, near the Borno state capital Maiduguri, Nigeria, ransacking weapons, and pushing Nigerian troops back.

Since it has grown in power and influence in the intervening years, its leadership has changed due to internal rivalries. In 2018, Abu Musab al-Barnawi's long-time ally, Mamman Nur, who had ties historically to AQIM and Al-Shabab was purged from ISWAP and eventually killed on orders from ISIS.[33] In March 2019, Abu Musab al-Barnawi himself was purged from ISWAP in favour of the more hard-line Abu Abdullah Ibn Umar al-Barnawi *alias* Ba Idrissa. Meanwhile, Ba'a Idrissa was reportedly overthrown in February 2020 and was replaced by Lawan Abubakar, otherwise called Ba Lawan.[34] The feud within ISWAP has resulted in further fragmentation. The main faction that split is led by Amir Abba Gana who took over from Ba'a Idrissa. A smaller faction is commanded by the duo of Amir Bako Borgozo and Modu Sulum, and another faction is led by Amir Kannami and another commander only known by the name Zainammi (Otto, 2020).[35]

[33] J. Zenn (2019) "The Return of al-Qaeda's Faction in Nigeria.

[34] Ibraheem, (2020), 'The reason for the Death of Mohammed Yusuf Son was revealed by ISWAP, Arewa Today, 26 February, https://arewatoday.com/2020/02/26/the-reason-for-the-death-of-mohammed-yusuf-son-was-revealed-by-iswap-members.html.

[35] D. Otto, (2020), 'ISIS in Africa: The most bitter split – Will regional states strike in the midst of chaos", The Nigerian, 18 April, http://thenigerian.news/isis-in-africa-the-most-bitter-split-will-regional-states-strike-in-the-midst-of-chaos/?amp.

Evolving Threats of Terrorism Since 2015

A careful examination of the BHT landscape in Nigeria reveals several current and emerging trends. These include sustained attacks despite internal schism, the growing dominance of ISWAP amidst rivalry, the wobbling resurgence of Ansaru, and terrorist infiltration of Nigeria's northwest zone, including exploitation of organised criminal schemes for survival.

Decline in Terrorist Incidents

Despite internal schism, the BHT has continued to launch deadly attacks on military, civilian, and humanitarian targets. One obvious trend however is the steep and steady decline in reported fatalities associated with the group since 2015. As data in Fig. 26.2 reveals, Boko Haram's most active and lethal period peaked in 2014–2015, in the lead up to the March 2015 elections. Since then, the group's attack rate and resulting fatalities have continued to decline. The number of attacks rose slightly in 2017, declined in 2018 and 2019, with a corresponding decline in fatalities.

The fluctuation is influenced by several factors including but not limited to offensive military operations by Nigerian troops acting under Operation *Lafiya Dole* and the MNJTF, fractionalization of the group, and the insurgents' tactic of withdrawing into sanctuaries to avoid major

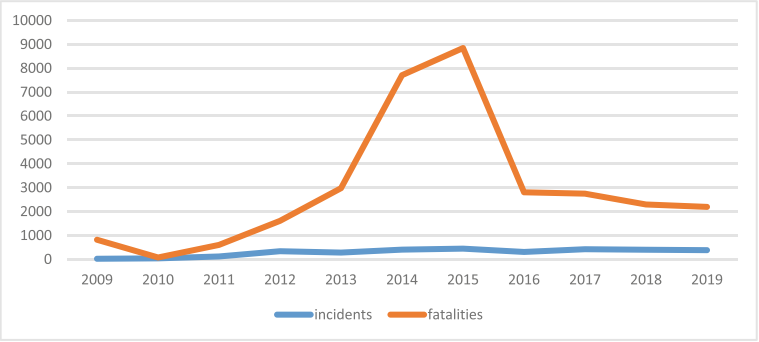

Fig. 26.2 Incidents and Casualties from the Boko Haram Insurgency, 2011–2019 (*Source* Author's compilation from ACLED 2023)

losses during the period of intensive military operations. In addition to the decline in fatalities, there is an equal loss of territorial control. At the peak of the insurgency in early January 2015, the terrorists controlled about 13 Local Governments in Borno State and several other towns and villages in neighbouring states of Adamawa and Yobe States. However, its capacity for territorial control has been severely degraded by national and regional military operations since 2015.

Sustenance of Audacious Attacks

The internal dynamics of these groups keep changing with very little impact on their capability to launch audacious attacks. Two deadly attacks in March 2020 targeted Chadian and Nigerian forces killed more than 140 soldiers, underlining the militants' continued threat in the Lake Chad region. On March 23, the JAS faction staged an attack on the Chadian Boma peninsula in Lake Chad, killing 92 Chadian soldiers and injuring 42 others. On the same day as the Boma attack, a Nigerian army convoy was ambushed by the ISWAP faction in Alagarno, Borno State, killing around 100 soldiers.

These attacks provoked sustained ground and airstrikes on the positions of Boko Haram (JAS and ISWAP) by Nigerian and Chadian troops, resulting in significant fatalities on the part of the insurgents. Sustained military operations in the Lake Chad region have contributed to the surrender of low- and mid-level Boko Haram fighters.[36] Despite recurrent internal schism and reported defections within their ranks, the insurgents continue to pose a serious threat to the stability of the Lake Chad region as evidenced by renewed attacks on military and civilian targets almost every week.

The Blurring of Target Selection

Beyond military targets, civilians have come under equally increasing attacks by both the JAS and ISWAP in recent times. In the early stages of ISWAP evolution, this faction was visibly lenient to civilians when compared to their rival the JAS. Hence, units affiliated with ISWAP

[36] Onuoha, Freedom. C. (2020), "Dilemma of Voluntary Surrender to State Security Forces by Boko Haram Recruits in Nigeria", *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research*, 1(1): 199–218.

engage in fewer violent events compared to the JAS. As noted by Matfess, only 9% of the violent events associated with Boko Haram have been attributed to the ISWAP faction since 2016 (see Fig. 26.3). Of those events, ISWAP engages in less civilian targeting. Since 2016, 25% of ISWAP's activity has been violence against civilians, as compared to 37% of the violent events associated with other Boko Haram (JAS) factions.[37]

This, however, is gradually changing. On 9 June 2020, for example, ISWAP militants raided Felo in Gubio, Borno state, killing at least 81 civilians in the herding village.[38] Although the attack is believed to be retribution against the killing of two ISWAP militants by locals while fighting off a raid on their herd, the emergence of a hard-line leadership in ISWAP in February may partly contribute to the viciousness. The pattern of subsequent attacks and accounts of local sources indicate that there are little or no major differences between the two factions as both have become increasingly ruthless against civilians.

Growing Dominance of Islamic State in West Africa Province Amidst Jihad Rivalries

The rival among the jihadist factions—Ansaru, JAS, and ISWAP—has been a feature of the jihadisphere in Nigeria's northeast. Differences in ideology, the quest for territorial control or expansion, and the desire for dominance in membership recruitment underpin the rivalry. These have resulted in deadly clashes. In June 2020, a Nigerian journalist with rare access to Boko Haram's leadership referenced a video showing ISWAP fighters executing two Ansaru members who were accused of working with Al-Qaeda to infiltrate and undermine the ISWAP.[39] But serious violent confrontations have always been between JAS and ISWAP factions, such as the incidents in Abadam, Arafa, Monguno, Yele, and Zuwa

[37] H. Matfess (2019) "The New Normal: Continuity and Boko Haram's Violence in North East Nigeria", ACLED, 11 February, https://acleddata.com/2019/02/11/the-new-normal-continuity-and-boko-harams-violence-in-north-east-nigeria/.

[38] Al Jazeera, (2020) "Fighters kill dozens, raze village in Nigeria's Borno state", 10 June, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/fighters-kill-dozens-raze-village-nigeria-borno-state-200610055549580.html.

[39] A. Salkida, (2020) "Kill One Terrorist, Create a Thousand More: What Fuels Terrorism in the Sahel?", *HumAngle,* 10 June, https://humangle.ng/kill-one-terrorist-create-a-thousand-more-what-fuels-terrorism-in-the-sahel/.

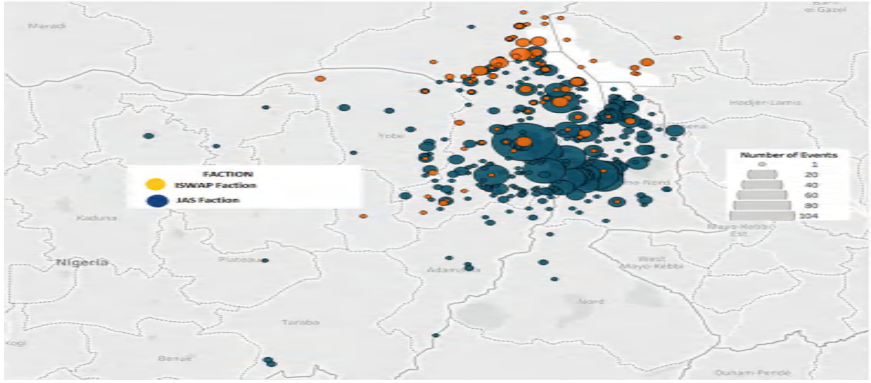

Fig. 26.3 Map of Violent Activities of Boko Haram by Faction (1 Jan 2016–2 Feb 2019)[40] (*Source* https://acleddata.com/2019/02/11/the-new-normal-continuity-and-boko-harams-violence-in-north-east-nigeria/)

[40] H. Matfess (2019) "The New Normal: Continuity and Boko Haram's Violence in North East Nigeria", ACLED, 11 February, https://acleddata.com/2019/02/11/the-new-normal-continuity-and-boko-harams-violence-in-north-east-nigeria/.

between August and September 2016 that resulted in huge casualties for JAS.[41]

In early April 2020, both the JAS and ISWAP factions lost hundreds of key fighters during sustained ground and aerial operations launched by the Chadian Army, Nigerian Army, and the MNJTF, in response to the 23rd March attacks on Chadian and Nigerian forces by the terrorists. Following the devastating strike, both rival factions allegedly agreed to a temporary truce after a reconciliation meeting initiated by some senior AZWAJ scholars on 14 April 2020.[42] The main purpose was to merge rival forces and reorganise the operational structure of the JAS and ISWAP factions.[43]

On 19 May 2021, however, Abubakar Shekau, was killed during a clash with the ISWAP fighters. During the attack, Shekau reportedly detonated his suicide vest, killing himself instantly. Following the death of Shekau, both factions reportedly resolved to work together after pledging allegiance to one Aba Ibrahim Al-Hashimiyil Al Khuraishi, designated as Khalifa Muslimai, or "the Leader of all Muslims".[44] However, some JAS fighters led by Bakoura Buduma, a former Shekau lieutenant, refused to surrender to the ISWAP leadership. In September 2021, for instance, JAS fighters invaded and dislodged ISWAP militants based at Kirta Wulgo Island. The island is very strategic to the ISWAP, as it offers a huge source of fishing revenues, and serves as a port for importing weapons and supplies into its territory. ISWAP has been fighting JAS remnants

[41] Vanguard, (2016) "Shekau's Boko Haram group, Barnawi camps clash", 8 September, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/09/shekaus-boko-haram-group-barnawi-camp-clash/.

[42] AZWAJ is a joint ISIS network of high-profile jihadist scholars/mediators linked to ISIS core affiliated groups operating mainly in Mali and Libya.

[43] D. Otto (2020) "Who was Amir Abu Imrana: ISWAP's most Powerful '3 Star General' killed by Nigerian Forces in Marte", 17 June, https://globalsentinelng.com/2020/06/17/who-was-amir-abu-imrana-iswaps-most-powerful-3-star-general-killed-by-nigerian-forces-in-marte/.

[44] Sahara Reporters, (2021) "Boko Haram, ISWAP reunite to work together in new video, appoint Al-khuraishi as 'Leader of all Muslims', 26 June, http://saharareporters.com/2021/06/26/boko-haram-iswap-reunite-work-together-new-video-appoint-al-khuraishi-leader-all-muslims.

who have refused to pay allegiance to it in order to consolidate its grip in the northeast.[45]

The ISWAP has become a dominant group since the death of the JAS leader, focusing on military targets and high-profile attacks. The ISWAP has been consolidating its grip in locations around Lake Chad, enabled through a restructuring process that built on four caliphates—Sambisa Forest, Alagarno Forest (nicknamed Timbuktu), Tumbuma, and the Lake Chad islands, each with its semi-autonomous leadership. It is believed that the territories will provide the group the operational bases for the extension of activities to other parts of Nigeria's north-east and Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

Although it is too early to foretell how the internecine battle between the two factions may end, an analyst in 2016 predicted four possible scenarios for the end of the factional rift—confrontation, reconciliation, dissolution, and conspiracy. The analysis considered confrontation as the most probable of them all, predicting that "sustained violent confrontation could lead to total decimation of one faction by the other".[46] In the meantime, the dynamics of infighting have ramifications for the humanitarian crisis in northeastern Nigeria. Besides the civilian population being caught in the crossfire, violent confrontations between the rival factions will constrict humanitarian delivery to communities in dire need of assistance. If the Lake Chad states fail to exploit the infighting to decimate the rival groups, the Islamic State will likely help its local affiliate, the more dominant ISWAP faction, to restructure and rebuild its formation in furtherance of IS expansionist agenda in Africa. The resurgence of audacious attacks on military bases in Nigeria's northeast since 2025, mainly by the ISWAP, is raising fears about a risk of returning to the peak Boko Haram-era insecurity in the region.

The Teetering Resurgence of Ansaru

The Ansaru has been inactive for years following a series of arrests of some of its leading members in 2016. Although the group largely restricted its presence to periodic online statements to reassure its existence, it

[45] AFP, (2021) "Nigeria jihadist infighting kills scores in Lake Chad", 28 September, https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210928-nigeria-jihadist-infighting-kills-scores-in-lake-chad.

[46] F.C Onuoha, (2016) "Split in ISIS-Aligned Boko Haram Group", p. 6.

has recently increased its online and offline footprints in the jihadist landscape. For instance, Ansaru released its first message in Fulfulde, a language widely spoken across Nigeria and the Sahel in May 2019. Later in October 2019, the group announced its return through the Al-Qaeda propaganda channel, the Global Islamic Media Front, which released a photo of Ansaru fighters and unveiled a new media outlet for the group, Al Yaqut Media Center.

Of particular importance were kidnapping and ambush incidents blamed on the group. Intelligence operatives believed that Ansaru members were responsible for the December 2019 kidnap of two expatriates, Zaid Alas from Jordan and Isah Jabour a Syrian, both working with Traicta Ltd, Shiroro, Niger State. They were released after a ransom payment of ₦120 million ransom.[47] The terrorists were also responsible for the kidnapping of some employees of Mothercat Construction Company, as well as Magajin Garin Daura in Katsina State. An event of notable significance in the group's resurgence was the 17 January 2020 attack on a military contingent escorting the convoy of the Emir of Potiskum along Kaduna-Zaira road.[48] The incident, which resulted in the death of at least six people, was the group's first attack since 2013. On 5 April 2021, terrorists suspected to be members of Ansaru attacked a military formation along the Kaduna-Birnin Gwari highway and killed 11 soldiers, four villagers and injured many others.[49] The latest attack represents an attempt by Ansaru to revive its operational strength. The group is currently exploiting ungoverned spaces, vulnerable rural communities, and the existing climate of insecurity in the Northwest zone to possibly deepen its recruitment, radicalisation, and fund-raising drives.

The group has reportedly taken-over some communities in Kaduna State, acting as defence forces protecting community residents from attacks by armed bandits. In October 2021, for instance, a violent clash

[47] S. Odita, (2020) "We were recruited in Mosques, trained in Libya – Suspected terrorists confess", *Guardian*, 10 May, https://guardian.ng/news/we-were-recruited-in-mosques-trained-in-libya-suspected-terrorists-confess/amp/.

[48] J. Nasi (2020) "Ansaru militant group claims responsibility for the attack on Yobe emir", *The Cable*, 19 January, https://www.thecable.ng/militant-group-claims-responsibility-for-attack-on-yobe-emir.

[49] L. Sadiq & M I. Yaba (2022) Ansaru in massive recruitment in Kaduna, distributes 'Sallah Gifts', *Daily Trust*, 6 May, https://dailytrust.com/ansaru-in-massive-recruitment-in-kaduna-distributes-sallah-gifts.

between members of the Ansaru group and bandits claimed the lives of at least 30 bandits around the Damari axis in Birnin Gwari, Kaduna State.[50] It also engages in recruitment and indoctrination activities in communities such as Damari, Farin Ruwa, Gobirawa, Kakini, Kazage, Kwasa Kwasa, Kutemeshi, Kuyello, Tabanni, and Unguwar Gajere, where they have established footprints. Such activities included the distribution Sallah gifts in the form of biscuits, performance of motorcycle stunts to the delight of villagers, and the sharing of pamphlets, flash discs, and other accessories on the activities of the group.[51] Its recruitment strategy also involved the kidnapping of vulnerable youth and forcibly conscripting them to join its ranks. If left unaddressed, Ansaru's gradual resurgence may gather momentum in the future in ways that would exacerbate the already dire security situation in northern Nigeria.

The Exploitation of Criminal Schemes

Another trend is the increasing diversification into evolving organised criminal schemes by the various factions. The various factions had exploited organised crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom to acquire funds and fame. In recent times, however, they are diversifying their operations to exploit criminal schemes such as cattle rustling, banditry, trafficking in wildlife (warthogs) and illicit resource (gold) extraction in ways that are proving difficult for security forces to dismantle. Both JAS and ISWAP factions, for instance, have leveraged cattle rustling in Borno state to generate funds. Security agencies have established that most of the cattle being traded at the markets in Borno State were the direct proceeds of cattle rustling perpetrated by insurgents. They transfer such loot to unscrupulous middlemen who use underhand ploys to deliberately disguise the transactions as legitimate.[52]

Particularly worrisome is emerging evidence indicating that BHT is infiltrating the ranks of criminal groups involved in banditry, cattle

[50] L. Sadiq (2021) How terrorists who declared ceasefire on abductions gunned down'30 bandits' in Kaduna, *Daily Trust*, 6 October, https://dailytrust.com/how-terrorists-who-declared-ceasefire-on-abductions-gunned-down-30-bandits-in-kaduna.

[51] L. Sadiq & M I. Yaba (2022) Ansaru in massive recruitment in Kaduna.

[52] K. Idowu (2016) "Boko Haram: Shettima inaugurates task force on cattle markets", *Punch*, 5 March https://punchng.com/boko-haram-shettima-inaugurates-task-force-on-cattle-markets/.

rustling, and kidnapping for ransom in the North West zone.[53] Their infiltration of the zone is likely driven by the quest to exploit opportunities offered by evolving criminal schemes, including the illegal mining of gold in the Zamfara state. An estimated 80% of gold mining operations in the state are carried out illegally and on an artisanal basis. Illegal gold mining in the zone has underpinned nefarious activities of criminal syndicates, cattle rustlers, and bandits for funding of terror groups.[54] Bandits are known to have overrun communities and taken-over mining spots which they exploit for their benefit. The Chief of Training and Operations at Nigerian Army Headquarters, recently posited that "these illegal mining operations have linkages with foreign elements including terror groups. These groups often provide the armed bandits with the small arms with which they control various mining sites and adjoining areas".[55] Meanwhile the "illegally mined gold is sometimes transported through the largely unsecured borders into neighbouring countries such as Niger, where it is traded for money, weapons and ammunition".[56] This emerging trend is implicated in the significant rise in violence in the North West zone in recent years.[57]

The ISWAP faction has evolved a lucrative economic stream based on careful control of the international trade on smoked fish as well as red pepper in Lake Chad. The insurgents have recently taken strategic steps to control and re-order trade in both products by imposing a new regime of levies and secure routes for fish traders to reach designated markets.[58]

[53] A. Dahiru (2020) "Militia Groups in North West Nigeria in a Process of Sealing Allegiance with Boko Haram", *HumAngle*, 16 June, https://humangle.ng/militia-groups-in-north-west-nigeria-in-a-process-of-sealing-allegiance-with-boko-haram/.

[54] Author telephone interview with M. Idris, a Katsina-based journalist and academic, 10 June 2020.

[55] L.O Adeosun, (2020), "Peace negotiations with bandits in Nigeria: Implications and prospects", presented at the 10th National Security Seminar, organised by the AANDEC, 26 February, at National Defence College, Abuja, p. 12.

[56] WANEP, (2020), 'Addressing armed banditry in the North-West Region of Nigeria: Exploring the potentials of a multi-dimensional conflict management approach, Policy Brief. Nigeria, p. 4.

[57] See for instance, International Crisis Group, (2020). Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling back the mayhem. Africa Report N°288.

[58] A. Salkida, (2020), 'How Boko Haram sustains operations through international trade in smoked fish', *HumAngle*, 26 April, https://humangle.ng/how-boko-haram-sustains-operations-through-international-trade-in-smoked-fish/.

They are also directly involved in the businesses that have proven to be very lucrative, given that over 70% of fish products traded in large urban markets of southern Nigeria come from the Lake Chad region. The taxes (*jizyah* and *Hadaya*) imposed on products or proceeds from such trades are not paid exclusively in cash to the insurgents. The tax regime equally accommodates a trade by barter option, allowing the insurgents to access essential requirements such as prescription drugs, stimulants, and petrol provided by smugglers who equally operate in the region.[59] In this way, the underground criminal economy serves well both the interests of the insurgents, smugglers, and residents. Overall, the growing organised crime-terror nexus feeds into the cycle of insecurity in northern Nigeria.

Shifting Jihadisphere from Northeast to Northwest and North Central zones

Another emerging and deeply troubling trend in Nigeria's Jihadisphere is the increasing penetration and perpetration of terrorist exploits in the northwest and north central geopolitical zones. These zones have become a nest for several armed groups (bandits) and an escape for jihadists facing more intense pressure from the ongoing counterinsurgency operations in the northeast.[60] Increased JAS, ISWAP, and Ansarul activities in recent times suggest a shift of focus of these groups to the region. Public facilities like airports, rail lines, schools, and prisons have been targeted. However, two incidents of notable significance in terms of their scale and ambition, were the March 2022 Kaduna-Abuja train attack and the July 2022 Kuje prison break.

On 28 March, bandits attacked a Kaduna-bound train carrying 970 passengers at night, about 89 km from Abuja station. At least eight people were killed and 168 were kidnapped.[61] The attack was initially suspected

[59] F. C. Onuoha, (2022), The Terrorism-Organized Crime Nexus in the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. In Paoli, L., Fijnaut, C., and Jan Wouters, J. (eds) *The Nexus Between Organized Crime and Terrorism: Types and Responses.* United Kingdom Edward Elgar.

[60] E. Akinwotu, (2022), "More than 160 passengers still missing from train attacked in Nigeria", The Guardian, April 21, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/21/over-160-passengers-still-missing-from-train-attacked-in-nigeria.

[61] O. Ojewale, A. Badiora, and F. C Onuoha, (2022,), "Kaduna's train attacks add to Nigeria's deep security problems", *ISS Today*, 7 April, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/kadunas-train-attacks-add-to-nigerias-deep-security-problems.

to be the handiwork of the so-called bandits in the region. Although no organisation has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, government officials and security experts claimed the involvement of jihadist groups, particularly Ansaru and ISWAP. This unprecedented act of violence has heightened concerns about growing bandits-jihadists' unholy handshake in the northwest, which I conceptualise as *banditerrorism*. The terrorists demanded one hundred million naira ransom for each of the abducted passengers. In the weeks that followed, the terrorists have requested the release of 15 terrorist commanders, their children detained by the military and an undisclosed amount of cash. On June 12, the terrorists released 11 hostages after 75 days in captivity, while another seven regained their freedom on July 10, after their relatives paid eight hundred million naira as ransom.[62]

As with the Kaduna-Abuja train attack, the July 2022 Kuje prison break adds to the growing terrorists' inroad in the north central area.[63] The ISWAP claimed responsibility for the attack in a viral video 24 hours later, showing how its members bombed and breached the Kuje Medium Security Custodial Centre.[64] The facility, which sits 47 kilometres from the Presidential Villa, has raised serious concerns on how the attackers managed to successfully break into the prison with ease. During the attack, 600 out of the prison's 994 inmates, including 64 Boko Haram terrorists, were freed. Khalid al-Barnawi, Ansaru factional leader jailed for bombing the UN Headquarters in Abuja, was among the Boko Haram members who escaped.[65] Mr. Al-Barnawi goes by many aliases, including Abu Hafsat, Mallam Dauda, Alhaji Tanimu Kafuri, Naziru, Alhaji Yahaya, Muhammad Usman, and Mohammed Usman, to avoid detection while conducting his criminal operations. The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) stated that at least five persons died in the attack, while over

[62] I. Hassan-Wuyo, (2022), "How terrorists received N800 million ransom to free 7 train passengers", *Vanguard*, July 11, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/07/how-terrorists-received-n800-million-ransom-to-free-7-train-passengers/.

[63] G. Onyedinefu, (2022) 'What I saw in Kuje Prison'. Businessday, July 17, https://businessday.ng/analysis/article/what-i-saw-in-kuje-prison/.

[64] G. Onyedinefu, (2022), 'ISWAP claims responsibility for Kuje prison attack", Businessday, July 17, https://businessday.ng/news/article/iswap-claims-responsibility-for-the-kuje-prison-attack/.

[65] P. Obaji, (2022), "Notorious 'Global Terror' Boss Escaped in Mass Prison Break, Jail Officials Say". Daily Beast, July 7, https://www.thedailybeast.com/notorious-global-terror-boss-escaped-in-nigeria-mass-prison-break-jail-officials-say?ref=scroll.

400 inmates have since been re-arrested. But none of the terrorists has been arrested so far.

These incidents reveal some "unholy" alliance between bandits and jihadist in the two adjoining zones. The alliance or collaboration is built on pragmatism and opportunism. In some instances, the terrorist groups have clashed with bandits, while in some other cases, they were working together. As noted by Yusuf Anka, "There are also times where you will see cooperation between them, when attacking government institutions, especially the military or in attacks for financial motives". The train attack was pragmatic as it was opportunistic. It was pragmatic in that it afforded the terrorist the opportunity to utilise the bandits' manpower to seize innocent citizens to be used as bargaining chips for the release of their detained leaders, possibly held in Kuje Prison.

It was opportunistic as it presented an avenue for both the terrorists and bandits to raise large funds from ransom to sustain their survival and other operational needs. One such operational need is the logistics requirements (mobility, arms, and communication among other) needed to successfully undertake prison break.

Analysis: Notable Government Responses to Terrorism in Nigeria

The activities of the BHT constitute the greatest existential threat to the Nigerian state. Diverse counterterrorism and COIN initiatives have been adopted by states and non-state actors at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels to combat the group.[66] In particular, the Nigerian governments have adopted legislative, policy, law enforcement, military, and socio-economic measures to address the terrorist challenge. These broad interventions are far too numerous and space constraint does not warrant exhaustive treatment of them. A few notable interventions are worthy of analysis.

The Nigerian government has enacted or reviewed some legal or statutory instruments to facilitate national efforts at combating the threat of terrorism. These would include the Terrorism Prevention Act 2011 (as amended); the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011, and the

[66] T.B. Oriola, F.C. Onuoha, & S. Oyewole, (Eds.) (2021). Boko Haram's terrorist campaign in Nigeria: Contexts, dimensions and emerging trajectories. Routledge.

Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit Act 2018, among others. These instruments enable multi-agency cooperation and strategic partnerships to counter terrorism in Nigeria. To strengthen the operationalisation of these laws, the Nigerian government has partnered with the European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to deliver over 82 capacity building activities, including the provision of extensive training to select groups of investigators, legal advisors, defence attorneys, prosecutors, and judges on a range of practically-focused terrorism-related issues in Nigeria.[67]

The Government of Nigeria has also evolved strategic frameworks to underpin a holistic response to the wave of insecurity associated with violent extremism and terrorism. Such guidance frameworks include the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (2014), National Security Strategy (2019), and the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (2017), among others. These strategic policy documents provide the overarching blueprint for a whole-of-society "soft" approach to dealing with the threat of terrorism and violent extremism.[68] Notwithstanding the adoption of these legal and policy frameworks, terrorism thrives partly due to the failure of government to address objective conditions that enable it to fester such as a sense of injustice, impunity by security forces, pervasive poverty, and widespread unemployment.

Law enforcement measures in the form of routine and special operations are being executed by the police as well as intelligence, customs, immigration, and drug officials to detect, disrupt and defeat criminal elements involved in terrorism. These interventions have led to the arrest and prosecutions of BHT members. Recently in February 2020, the police's special forces raided the Kuduru Forest, in Birnin Gwari, Kaduna State, which hosts members of the Ansaru terrorist group, bandits, and kidnappers.[69] The police claimed it killed over 250 terrorists and bandits

[67] UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/nigeria/en/nigeria--eu--unodc-renew-commitments-against-terrorism--unveil-a-follow-on-project.html.

[68] M. I. Ugwueze and F.C Onuoha (2020) "Hard Versus Soft Measures to Security: Explaining the Failure of Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Nigeria", *Journal of Applied Security Research*, https://doi.org/10.1080/19361610.2020.1811936.

[69] N. Nseyen, (2020, February 5). 250 bandits killed as police invade terrorists' camp in Kaduna. Daily Post. Retrieved from https://dailypost.ng/2020/02/05/250-bandits-killed-as-police-invade-terrorists-camp-in-kaduna.

in the operations. In May 2020, nine members of the group who had received training in Libya were also arrested by the police in their hideouts in Kaduna, Kano, and Katsina States.[70] Leveraging extant legal instruments, authorities have successfully prosecuted some BHT members and their corroborators. As of February 2018, for instance, more than 200 people have been convicted in Nigeria on charges related to their involvement with Boko Haram.[71] But the trials exposed significant problems with Nigeria's criminal justice system. Weak investigations, arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention, and the absence of legal aid and evidence marred the cases.[72] In addition, inter-agency rivalry, limited intelligence structures, and deficiency in forensic skills have limited the impact of law enforcement operations.

The deployment of troops in COIN operations remains the most visible response to Boko Haram terrorism. Successive military operations against the group include *Operation Flush (2009), Operation Restore Order I (2011), Operation Restore Order II (2012), Operation BOYONA (2013), Operation Zaman Lafiya (2013), Operation Lafiya Dole (2015), and Operation Hadin Kai (2021)*. These operations were geared towards degrading, deterring, and defeating the insurgents.[73] Similar military operations have been staged against criminal entities such as bandits, cattle rustlers, and kidnappers in other parts of northern Nigeria. Military operations against the insurgents and criminal entities have recorded modest successes such as arrest and killing of criminal suspects, interdiction of their logistics, destruction of safe havens, recovery of deadly weapons, and disruption of networks, among others. In May 2020, for instance, Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Tukur Buratai, disclosed

[70] S. Odita, (2020) "We were recruited in Mosques.

[71] Reuters (2018) "Nigeria convicts 205 Boko Haram suspects in mass trials". 19 February, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security/nigeria-convicts-205-boko-haram-suspects-in-mass-trials-idUSKCN1G3253.

[72] A. Ngari and A. Olojo (2020) "Mass terror trials test Nigeria's criminal justice system", *ISS Today*, 21 May, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/mass-terror-trials-test-nigerias-criminal-justice-system.

[73] F.C Onuoha, C. Nwangwu, and M.I. Ugwueze (2020), 'Counterinsurgency operations of the Nigerian military and Boko Haram insurgency: Expounding the viscid manacle', Security Journal, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-020-00234-6.

that troops killed 1,015 terrorists and arrested 84 of their collaborators within six weeks.[74] Military onslaught, however, has failed to bring about the needed respite, owing largely to insufficient funding, inadequate manpower, assets deficits, intelligence failure, sabotage, corruption, and difficult terrain.

In addition, Nigeria has signed up to several regional and international frameworks designed to strengthen its national capacity to respond to terrorism. Nigerian troops are equally deployed with the MNJTF combating Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The MNJTF has a total strength of about 10,000 uniformed elements drawn from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Benin.[75] The intervention of the MNJTF has contributed to reducing the threat of the BHT by pushing them back into their sanctuaries.[76] The operations of the regional force have largely failed to achieve its mandate due to political mistrust, the pursuit of vested interests by states, inadequate military assets, language barriers, and resource constraints.

The Nigerian government has also undertaken some initiatives aimed at addressing poverty, unemployment, and destitution which contribute to the security threats. Interventions such as the N-Power Programme, for instance, seek to deliver large-scale skill development for Nigerian youth to remove the conditions that terrorist ideologies have exploited in recruiting youths. Additionally, the Presidential Initiative for the North-East (PINE) is a large-scale intervention being implemented to jumpstart the economy of the North-East while repositioning the region for long-term prosperity.[77] The paucity of funds, patronage politics,

[74] M. Olugbode (2020) "Military Killed 1,015 Boko Haram Terrorists in Two Months, Says Buratai", *Thisday,* 25 May, https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/05/25/military-killed-1015-boko-haram-terrorists-in-two-months-says-buratai/.

[75] Nextier SPD, (2020) "Assessing the MNJTF Mission", Policy Weekly, Vol.3 Issue 28, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20200807_Nextier-SPD_Weekly_Assessing-MNJTF-Mission_0.pdf.

[76] F.C. Onuoha, A. E. Y. Tchie, and M.L. Zabala, (2023). *A quest to win the hearts and minds: Assessing the effectiveness of the multinational joint task force*. Norway: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, https://trainingforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/EPON_MNJTF.pdf.

[77] State House (2016) "Presidential Committee on North-East Initiative", https://statehouse.gov.ng/policy/councils-committees/presidential-committee-on-north-east-initiative/.

and corruption have meant that these interventions hardly benefit the intended targets: vulnerable individuals and impacted communities.[78]

An evolving but controversial initiative is a defection programme known as "Operation Safe Corridor" (OPSC), proposed to encourage willing and repentant BHT members to surrender and embrace peace.[79] Conceived in September 2015, it is a multi-sectoral programme involving 17 government agencies administering specific projects but coordinated by the military. The programme exposes the beneficiaries to psycho-social therapy, training on citizenship, and vocational skills acquisition such as carpentry, tailoring, vulcanising, welding, and barbing. Upon completion, they are assisted with grants to set up businesses in their various communities. In February 2020, a government official revealed that about 1,400 ex-Boko Haram fighters that surrendered to the defence and security forces have been released in tranches and re-integrated into the society. The former BHT members leveraged on the Nigerian Government's olive branch and exposed to the Deradicalisation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DRR) programme under the Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) which started in 2016.[80] The conception and delivery of the OPSC programme, however, is fraught with several challenges such as lack of discernible legal framework, weak coordination among relevant agencies, absence of gender mainstreaming, overt militarisation, and limited consultation with prospective communities that will receive rehabilitated Boko Haram members.[81] There however exists growing concerns on the capacity of the OPSC to effectively process, deradicalise, and rehabilitate the growing number of former Boko Haram member and their wives and children that have surrender to the Government of Nigeria.

[78] Y. Kazeem (2016) "An $8 million refugee fund scandal shows Buhari's anti-corruption drive in Nigeria is not going to plan", *Quartz Africa,* 9 December, https://qz.com/africa/858019/a-new-8m-scam-of-relief-funds-shows-nigerias-buhari-anti-corruption-drive-is-not-going-to-plan/.

[79] F. C. Onuoha, (2020). "Dilemma of Voluntary Surrender to State Security Forces by Boko Haram Recruits in Nigeria", *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research*, 1(1), pp 199–218.

[80] M. Olugbode, (2020), "Military Frees 1, 400 Repentant Boko Haram Suspects", *Thisday*, 12 February, https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/02/12/military-frees-1-400-repentant-boko-haram-suspects/.

[81] M.I. Ugwueze, E. Ngwu, and F.C Onuoha, (2021) "Operation Safe Corridor Programme and Reintegration of Ex-Boko Haram Fighters in Nigeria", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096211047996.

Conclusion

This examination of BHT in Nigeria is reasonably broad and with a particular focus on current or emerging trends in the terrorism landscape. It highlighted the diversity and effectiveness of measures—legislative, military, law enforcement, socio-economic, and reformatory—to combat the scourge. Boko Haram is evolving under the pressure of combined national and regional COIN operations by the Lake Chad Basin states. While it has suffered significant losses in fighters and territory since its operational peak in late 2014, the dynamics of the Boko Haram insurgency reveal several changes and continuity in the trajectory of terrorism in Nigeria. Despite suffering military defeats and experiencing internal schism, the group's capacity to sustain targeted and mass killings demonstrate continuity in the spectrum of extremist violence in Africa's most populous country. In sum, the Ansaru, JAS, and ISWAP represent the terrorist triumvirate fangs competing for a choking grip and dominance of the evolving *jihadisphere* in Nigeria. Although it is difficult to predict how and when the terrorist threat will end, it is very well obvious that the insurgency has continued to drain Nigeria financially, materially, and militarily.

Efforts to defeat the BHT have failed largely due to the neglect of some of the push factors that enabled the violent extremist groups to fester—bad governance, endemic corruption, under-development, and impunity by security forces. While concerted measures need to be taken by the government to strengthen mechanisms for deepening transparency, professionalism, and accountability in the use of state security forces, more focused attention must be paid to addressing the objective conditions that have created fertile ground for Boko Haram recruitment and radicalisation. To this end, the Nigerian State needs to shore up governance performances by better delivering public goods to its citizens, strengthening democratic institutions to promote inclusivity, reforming the criminal justice system to preserve the rule of law, and strengthening anti-corruption agencies. These efforts demand that political leaders judiciously utilise state resources to address economic hardship, rising inequality, pervasive poverty, widespread unemployment, social frustration, and widespread corruption prevalent in contemporary Nigerian society.

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PART VI

Reflections and Prognosis

CHAPTER 27

Africa: The New Epicentre of Global Terrorism

C. Nna-Emeka Okereke and Rohan Gunaratna

Introduction

Africa and Asia are the two regions most affected by terrorism after the Middle East. The incidents in Africa remained at all-time highs in 2024, a trend that could most certainly escalate in 2025. With the drawdown of European forces and the increase of Turkish and Russian forces, Africa will retain its profile as the global epicentre of terrorist threats. With the threat cascading from the Maghreb to its south, the Sahel recorded the highest levels of violence in Africa accounting for over half of activity on the continent in 2024. The deaths and injuries tripled with Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara

C. N.-E. Okereke
Irregular Warfare Centre, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria

R. Gunaratna (✉)
International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Singapore
e-mail: isrkgunaratna@ntu.edu.sg

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(ISGS) intensifying their attacks and expanding their territorial control in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The threat by both Al-Qaeda and IS affiliates is shifting to Africa south and west.

In their work titled, "A Global Strategy to Address the Islamic State in Africa," Bacon, Doctor, and Warner describe Africa as the "*new global epicentre of jihadi terror*.[1] This pedigree is drawn from deep-rooted contradictions inherent in Africa itself. The continent has vast unoccupied, uninhabited and under-governed spaces often exploited by terrorists, rebels, insurgents and criminal elements for their anti-state activities. Yet, Africa is further exposed to global interplay of power, influence and competing interests at domestic and international spheres. Africa is home to millions of impoverished, aggrieved and vulnerable persons who could be manipulated with terrorist narratives for recruitment and radicalisation.

By 2024, the continent of Africa host four Maktab or commands of the Islamic State as follows:

- Maktab al-Karrar located in Somalia is responsible for East and Central Africa.
- Maktab al-Furqan in Nigeria is responsible for West Africa and the Sahel.
- Maktab al-Anfal was previously located in Libya but now subsumed within Maktab al-Furqan in Nigeria; and
- Maktab Dhu al-Nurayn located in Sinai and responsible for Egypt and Sudan.

The relationship of Islamic State Maktabs in Africa within the General Directorate of Provinces are shown in Fig. 27.1.

The proliferation of terrorist organisations in accompanying hike in terrorist attacks have deepened and redefined Africa security landscape as the accompanying violence have become increasingly fatal and severe. As at the third decade of the twenty-first century, the active terrorist groups operating in Africa include the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (JNIM) affiliates such as the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb and Ansaru,

[1] Tricia Bacon, Austin C. Doctor, Jason Warner, "A Global Strategy to Address the Islamic State in Africa" *International Centre for Counterterrorism Publication*, 29 July 2022, https://icct.nl/publication/a-global-strategy-to-address-the-islamic-state-in-africa/ (accessed 23 January 2023).

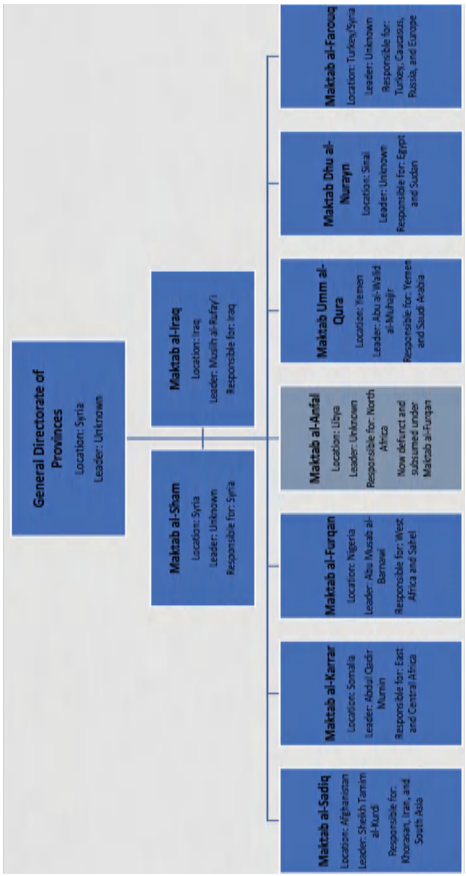

Fig. 27.1 Overview of the structure of Islamic State's General Directorate of Provinces (*Source* Tore Hamming)

Boko Haram, Al Shabaab al Mujahidin, Islamic State in Central Africa Peninsula (ISCAP), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State in West Africa province (ISWAP), Islamic State in Somalia (ISS).

Statistics from the Africa Terrorism Database indicates that from 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2023, the Sahel region recorded about 6,500 terrorist attacks leading to approximately 36,000 deaths and about 10,000 injuries. This data represents about 55% of all terrorist attacks and more than 60% of total deaths in Africa attributed to terrorism within the same period.[2] Terrorism in Africa have therefore become major threats to international peace and security and sub-Saharan Africa has overtaken the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in terms of the incidents of terrorist attacks and accompanying deaths and injuries. The Sahel has gradually taken a centre stage as terrorist groups unleash audacious attacks in the region as shown in Fig. 27.2.

Terrorist attacks in the Sahel reached its peak in 2019 and gradually declined until 2022 when over 52% increase in attacks were experienced. In 2023, a total of 1,673 terrorist attacks in the Sahel were recorded in

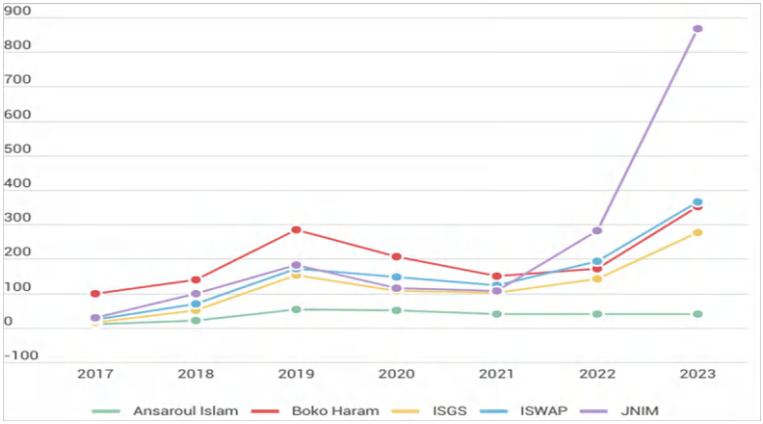

Fig. 27.2 Terrorism Attack Trends by Active Terrorist Groups in the Sahel Region (2017–2023) (*Data Source* AUCTC Africa Terrorism Database, 2024)

[2] African Union, "Worsening Situation of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in the Sahel: What More Could Be Done to Avoid Destabilisation of West Africa Coastal States?" African Union Counterterrorism Centre Policy Paper 004, December, 2024.

the database of the African Union Counterterrorism Centre (AUCTC) culminating to 8,840 deaths which represents over 68% increase in the incident of death when compared to 2022.

The escalation of terrorism in Africa presents a striking paradox. This stems from the truism that midway into the third decade of the twenty-first century and after over a quarter of a century since the adoption of the Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa in 1999, the continent has emerged the global epicentre of terrorism. The threat of terrorism is intensifying and has become increasingly entrenched as global terrorist networks such as the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda and their affiliates are exploiting local conflicts and fragilities to serve their own ends.[3] These terrorist groups are leveraging organised crimes, economic deprivation, governance deficits, terrorist organisations in Africa to threaten and deepen the fragility of states in Africa while spreading and globalising acts of terrorism.

In the lens of the United Nations scribe, Antonio Guterres, terrorist groups in Africa are shredding the social fabric of entire countries with the blades of violence and mistrust such that community by community, terrorist groups are extending their reach, widening their networks, adding fighters and resources and making common cause with transnational organised crimes with civilians paying the highest price in every case, and, in the end, all of humanity pays.[4] So far, despite the concerted counterterrorism measures adopted at the respective national, regional and continental levels in Africa, the incidence of terrorism and violent extremism have persisted in the continent such that since 2017, the activities of terrorist in northern Mozambique has transformed the region into the fifth theatre of terrorist aggression in Africa after the Lake Chad basin, North Africa, the Sahel and Somalia. Africa has therefore emerged a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment, radicalisation and violent extremism.

The continued spread of terrorism in Africa and accompanying calamitous consequences have frustrated the expectations and optimism that the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The Convention, adopted in Algiers on 1 July 1999, enhances the capacity of African states to stem the tide of

[3] Vibhu Misha, "Africa Now 'Global Epicentre' of Terrorism: UN Chief" *United Nations News*, 24 January 2024, https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145852 (accessed 13 October 2024).

[4] Ibid.

terrorism in the continent. This is happening as the African Union and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are implementing various mechanisms against terrorism such as legal frameworks, policy initiatives and strategies targeted at combating terrorism and violent extremism.

As part of the continental counterterrorism responses, the Seventeenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Heads of Government of the African Union endorsed the African Model Anti-Terrorism Law on Terrorism at Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in July 2011. This law gives effect to the OAU Convention for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the Protocol thereto, the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa. It further strengthens the AU Decision of July 2009 to Combat the Payment of Ransom to Terrorist Groups and the AU Decision of July 2010 on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.[5] The Africa Model Law also legitimises various counterterrorism instruments endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council Resolutions which are binding on member states.[6]

At the regional levels, the respective RECs introduced far reaching initiatives to mobilise member states to adopt bold political declarations and common actions against terrorism while also engaging strategic partners to support the various regional mechanisms. In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) expanded the mandate of the *Groupe Intergouvernemental d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique de l'Ouest* (GIABA) or Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in 2008 to include countering financing of terrorism. Subsequently, the ECOWAS adopted the Political Declaration and Common Action against Terrorism in February 2013, otherwise referred to as the ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy. In a similar vein, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) established the *Groupe d'Action Contre le Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique Centrale* (GABAC) to coordinate regional responses to countering terrorist financing. The East and Southern Africa Anti-Money

[5] African Union, "The Africa Model Anti-Terrorism Law, 2011" adopted at the Seventeenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held at Malabo, Equatorial Guinea from 30 June -2 July 2011, https://archives.au.int/bitstream/handle/123456789/8313/african-model-law-E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 27 November 2022).

[6] Ibid.

Laundering Group (ESAAMLAG) performs similar mandate for East and Southern African countries while the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) coordinates the regional efforts for countering terrorist financing for Middle East and North Africa.

It is instructive to note that terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Africa have deepened despite the elaborate instruments and counterterrorism responses. Drawing from the above, efforts are made below to appraise terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in Africa by examining the evolving dynamics from which informed speculations on the future of terrorism in Africa are proffered.

Reflections on Terrorist Threats and Vulnerabilities in Africa

As the world progresses into the third decade of the twenty-first century, concerns on the menace of terrorism in Africa have become increasingly engaging as terrorist attacks have consistently progressed from North Africa through the Sahel-Saharan belt and now threatening the coastal states of West Africa. The hinterland states of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, the states of East Africa and the Horn as well as littoral and non-littoral states of Southern Africa have become vulnerable to terrorism following the 2017 Capo Delgado terrorist attacks. Reflections on the last three decades since 1990 reveals certain trends on the evolution of terrorism in Africa.

Between 1990 and 2000, terrorist activities in Africa were largely geographical confined to North Africa and steered largely by returnee North Africans that fought alongside the Mujahidin in Afghanistan. There were, however, two audacious terror attacks in East Africa, notably the attacks on United States embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es Salaam in August 1998. Within the last decade of the twentieth century, other regions of Africa were threatened more by various forms of armed conflict and civil wars. This was the case of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zaire now the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Chad, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea among others where civil wars threatened not only the individual country concerned with fratricidal carnage and appalling humanitarian catastrophes, but also often stimulated cross-border tensions and uncertainties that threatened regional security too.

Post September 11 Attacks

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the 9/11 attacks on the United States by Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda Network redefined the dynamics of terrorism and counterterrorism on the global stage with enormous implications for the continent Africa. The global community intensified counterterrorism offensives with various instruments in the form of legislations, policies and strategies at national, continental and global levels. At the United Nations, the Security Council adopted the Resolution 1373 in September 2001 while the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy in 2008, which rested on the four key pillars to guide global counterterrorism efforts. In Europe, the Council of the European Union (EU) adopted the EU Counterterrorism Strategy in Brussels on 30 November 2005 which is hinged on four critical pillar notably to Prevent, protect, pursue and respond. The strategic commitment of the EU was to combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, make Europe safer, in the manner that allow its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice.[7] This commitment was sustained by the strengthening of counterterrorism measures, especially with respect to immigration requirements and funds transfer among others. This commitment was sustained by the strengthening of counterterrorism measures, especially with respect to immigration requirements and funds transfer among others.

In response to new and stiffer counterterrorism offensives, the Al-Qaeda and its global terrorist networks sought new sanctuaries and vulnerable spaces to mobilise their activities and the fragile states of Africa which lacked the capacity to effectively regulate their territories became useful. Terrorist organisations therefore leveraged the availability of ungoverned and under-governed spaces across Africa to establish bases for training while the mass of vulnerable and aggrieved population formed the nucleus of recruits for terrorist activities. The African continent also provided conduits for illicit transnational trafficking through which terrorist organisations raised funds to sustain their existence and operations. It was in this decade that Boko Haram emerged and concentrated its activities in Nigeria prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Other

[7] Council of Europe, "The European Union Counterterrorism Strategy" https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204/EN/pdf (accessed 27 November 2022).

terrorist organisations of the era operating in Africa, included such as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and its successor the Al-Qaeda in the Land of Islamic Maghreb, Al Shahab Al Mujahedeen and the Lord Resistance Army (LRA).

Post-Arab Spring

With the advent of the Arab Spring in the MENA in 2011, the terrorism landscape in Africa was rejigged as new grievances and armed conflicts erupted. Extremist groups exploited to intensify terrorist aggression on the continent. While the political transition that accompanied the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt took off relatively smoothly, the experience of Libya was characterised by revolutionary turbulence, armed rebellion and civil war that culminated to the violent overthrow of the Ghaddafi regime. As in Libya, the Arab Spring in Syria and Yemen were also characterised by armed violence and rebellion that deepened insecurity beyond their respective national territories with adverse spill-over on Africa.

The rebellion in Libya and violent overthrow of the Ghadaffi regime opened up the country's armoury in the manner that sparked scramble by various armed groups within and beyond Libya that took advantage of the weakened central control of stockpiles of military hardware in the country. In Syria, the rebellion to overthrow the Bashar al-Assad regime created an enabling environment for the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL). It later spread to North and sub-Saharan parts of Africa to strengthen existing terrorist organisations and deepen insecurities across.

Libya's proximity to the Sahel and Lake Chad basin exposed both neighbouring sub-regions to the domino effects of the armed rebellion that ousted the Ghaddafi regime as extremist groups in the Sahel became bolstered with looted military hardware with which they confronted various national defence and security forces engaged in counterterrorism and counter insurgency operations. In the Lake Chad area, former leader of the Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau, pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Islamic State in March 2015 and received franchise to exist as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). Similarly, armed groups in the Sahel acting as cells of global jihadi networks, merged to form the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin* (JNIM) which focused their operations largely in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

Threats to Coastal States

Since 2016, terrorist groups in the Sahel have extended attacks towards the southern regions of Burkina Faso and Mali including the border frontiers from eastern Mali through north of Burkina Faso and along the Burkina-Mali border. Evidence suggests that terrorists linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State commenced cross-border encroachment into the northernmost frontiers of the coastal states of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.[8] In addition, the investigations into the March 2016 terrorist attack at Grand Bassam beach resort near Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire revealed the involvement of foreigners such as Kounta Dallah, a national of Mali and alleged mastermind of the operation in the planning and execution of the attack as well as the existence of dormant cells of the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) incubating in various parts of the country.[9] Furthermore, members of the JNIM operating from Burkina Faso attacked a detachment of the country's military and gendarmerie at Kafolo and Kolobougou respectively in March 2021.[10] The JNIM further attacked the population in the frontier towns of Bole, Tougbo, in Cote d'Ivoire in June 2021 accusing them of serving as informants to the Ivorian defence and security forces.

The apprehensions over the growing possibility of cross-border terrorist attacks in Ghana was heightened in June 2022 when the Ministry of National Security (MNS) issued alert on suspicious movement of terrorists in the mountains of Bunkpurungu/Nakpanduri District in the Northeast region of Ghana and also at Garu in the Upper East Region. Ghana's National Security Coordinator, Ambassador Major General Francis Adu-Amanfoh disclosed in the communique that the suspected terrorists were "reportedly sighted aboard motorbikes dressed

[8] Daniel Eizenga and Amandine Gnanguenon, "Recalibrating Coastal West Africa's Response to Violent Extremism" *Africa Security Brief*, No. 43, 22 July 2024, https://africacenter.org/publication/asb43en-recalibrating-multitiered-stabilization-strategy-coastal-west-africa-response-violent-extremism/ (accessed 15 December 2024).

[9] *Deutstche Welle*, "Ivory Coast: Jihadis sentenced to life over beach attack" 12 December 2022, https://www.dw.com/en/ivory-coast-jihadis-sentenced-to-life-over-beach-attack/a-64231731 (accessed 5 January 2023).

[10] William Assanvo, Terrorism in Cote d'Ivoire is no Longer just an External Threat" *ISS Today*, 15 June 2021; https://issafrica.org/iss-today/terrorism-in-cote-divoire-is-no-longer-just-an-external-threat (accessed 29 November 2022).

in apparels that hid their faces and headed in the Garu District."[11] Subsequently, in July 2022, several victims of terror attacks on Bittou in Burkina Faso crossed the borders into Bawku West, Binduri and Baku Municipal Areas in northern Ghana to seek refuge.[12] It is estimated that about three million Burkinabe nationals have been forcibly displaced as a result of the accompanying insecurities.[13]

Available statistics indicates that over 500 violent extremist incidents occurred within 50 km of the shared border frontiers linking the Sahel and the coastal states of Benin, Ghana and Togo as opposed to just 50 of such incidents in 2020.[14] The Republic of Benin and Togo also experiences attacks by gunmen and terrorist groups operating in the border areas with Burkina Faso. In July 2024, terrorist from the Burkina Faso border town of Kompienga invaded Togo killing 12 soldiers, seized a Togolese army camp and looted weapons.[15] The Republic of Benin also experiences cross-border attacks by gun men and terrorists operating at its shared northern borders with Burkina Faso. Attacks by the JNIM were initially restricted around the Pendjari National Parks in the Alibori and Atacora regions but have since June 2022 been extended to populated areas while also forcing elements of the Beninois military from the border areas and widening the security vacuum.[16] The expansion of cross-border attacks by terrorist organisations to Benin is partly considered as a reaction

[11] Republic of Ghana, Ministry of National Security "Suspicious Movement of Persons in the Garu and Bunkpurugu/Nankpanduri Districts" *Public Statement* with My Ref No. MNS/NSC/03/06/221 dated 3 June 2022.

[12] Human Security Research Council, Ghana, "Victims of Terrorist Attacks on Bittou in Burkina Faso seek Refuge in Bawku West, Binduri and Bawku Municipal Areas in Ghana" https://hsrcgh.org/2022/07/27/victims-of-terrorism-on-bittou-in-burkina-faso-seek-refuge-in-bawku-west-binduri-and-bawku-munipal-areas-in-ghana/ (accessed 30 July 2022).

[13] African Centre for Strategic Studies, July 2024, *Op. Cit.* p. 8.

[14] African Centre for Strategic Studies, "Africa's 2024 Security Trends in 10 Graphics" 17 December, 2024, p. 2.

[15] Saskaya Vandoorme, Nick Paton Walsh and Gianluca Mezzoflore, "Massacre in Burkina Faso left 500 Dead, Double Previous Estimates, According to French Security Assessment" Cable News Network 4 October 2024, https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/04/africa/burkina-faso-massacre-600-dead-french-intel-int/index.html (accessed 11 December 2024).

[16] Voice of America "Jihadi Violence hits Benin, Shows Spread Across West Africa" 28 December 2022, https://www.voanews.com/a/jihadi-violence-hits-benin-shows-spread-across-west-africa-/6895272.html?s=08 (accessed 5 January 2023).

to her participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in solidarity with her affected neighbours which share access to the lake.

The Accra Initiative

In preparation to contain the perceived and/or imminent threats of cross-border terrorism from the Sahel to the coastal states of West Africa, the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo launched the Accra Initiative in 2017. Mali and Niger joined the Accra Initiative in 2019 while Nigeria was admitted on Observer Status in November 2022 with the hope that it will become a full member afterwards. The Initiative is an African-led and Africa-centred cooperative and collaborative security mechanism aimed at preventing the spill-over of terrorism from the Sahel and to address the transnational organised crimes within the common border areas of member states.[17] The Accra Initiative further encourages capacity building, exchange of intelligence and military actions against terrorist forces in the Sahel that threaten coastal West Africa.

Ghana's counterterrorism commitment became an issue of concern following the publication of a report by Netherland's Clingendael Institute which portrayed Ghana as a safe haven and logistic corridor for the JNIM militants in Burkina Faso. The report indicated that armed militants in Burkina Faso discreetly utilise the shared border areas within Ghana's jurisdiction to access and stock food, fuel and explosive while also providing access to medical care in local hospitals within Ghana for injured fighters.[18] In addition, several explosive charges and detonator cords used for targeting UN and government troops in Mali have also been tracked to mining operations in Ghana.[19] While it notes that Ghana authorities may not have formally struck a deal with the terrorists,

[17] Republic of Ghana, "The Government of Ghana Refutes Story on UK Special Forces for Ghana" *Press Release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Accra*, 22 November 2022.

[18] David Lewis and Maxwell Akalaare Adombila, "In Ghana, Sahel Jihadis find Refuge and Supplies, Sources Say" *Reuters*, 26 October 2024, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ghana-sahel-jihadis-find-refuge-supplies-sources-say-2024-10-24/ (accessed 27 October 2024).

[19] Ibid.

there exists speculations that Ghana defence and security forces hesitates to disrupt militants' activities fearing escalation while the militants spare Ghana the sort of audacious attacks meted upon its neighbours. The consequence is that Ghana risk allowing the Islamists establish roots within its jurisdiction that accommodate recruitment and radicalisation. The official response of Ghana Ministry of National Security was a condemnation of the report and rejection of the assertion portraying Ghana as a supply line for militants while asserting that there exists no non-aggression policy or tacit agreement with militant groups.[20]

Yet, beyond Ghana's official condemnation of the report, there exist near similar perception about the unofficial agreements by African governments and armed groups restraining the latter from attacking their countries in exchange. This speculation was raised on Mauritania in a preliminary analysis of the special operation on Mauritania Prison Terrorists Escapees published by the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism published in March 2023 which notes that:

> Mauritania's Counter-Terrorism efforts have been praised as model for emulation by Sahel countries and other African Countries in the eye of the storm of terrorist attacks, though it has been alleged that Mauritania during the time of President Aziz brokered a deal with AQIM not to attack the country. The alleged 'non-aggression pact' with AQIM was unveiled by documents seized in Osama Bin Laden's refuge in Abbottabad, Pakistan, by American special forces.[21]

Such speculations have always been rejected by Mauritania which insists that its's defence and security forces has the capacity to protect the country through effective responses in addition to various national "multidimensional approach combining preventive and repressive measures which take into account the factors that are conducive for the development and spread of terrorism."[22] Meanwhile, the Blaise Campaore regime in Burkina Faso was also speculated to have struck similar informal

[20] Republic of Ghana, "Ministry of National Security's Response to Reuters' Report on Alleged Terrorist Activity in Ghana" *Press Release*, Ministry of National Security, 25 October 2024.

[21] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Algiers, "Mauritania Prison Terrorists Escapees Killed in Special Operation" *Preliminary Analysis*, ACSRT/PRE-REP/02/2023, 16 March 2023.

[22] Ibid.

agreements with terrorist groups in the Sahel restraining attacks within Burkina Faso and with national officials rather being active in hostage negotiations, prior to regime's overthrow in October 2014.

Islamic State Spread in the Sahel

As part of its expansion in West Africa and the Sahel, the ISGS has continued to make incursions into Boulgou, Koulpelogo, Kompienga and the Tapoa Provinces in southern parts of Burkina Faso while also working hard to consolidate their presence in the Tillaberi, Tahoua and Dosso regions of Niger. It was from a broad appreciation of the enormity of terrorist threats and vulnerabilities in the region that the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Antonio Gueterres declared in September 2022 as follows:

> Let's be clear: the security crisis in the Sahel represents a global threat. If nothing is done, the effects of terrorism, violent extremism and organised crimes will be felt far beyond the region and the African continent. An international, urgent and coordinated response is needed.[23]

Within the first half of 2022, available statistics from the Africa Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) reveals that the highest incidents of terrorism in Africa occurred in the Sahel belt and comprised 179 attacks resulting in 1,909 deaths.[24] The bulk of the attacks occurred in the Liptako-Gourma region, particularly Gao, Mopti and Menaka regions of Mali, the Sahel regions of Burkina Faso and the Tillaberi region of Niger (Fig. 27.3).

Further terrorist attacks in the Sahel belt within the period were perpetrated by the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the Lake Chad basin and these attacks accounted for 153 attacks which resulted in 1,299 deaths.[25] These terrorist attacks were executed in the Diffa region of southeast part of the Republic of Niger, northeast part of Nigeria, Far North region of Cameroon and the southwest parts of the Republic

[23] Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, twitted on Twitter handle: @antonioguterres at 6:30 am on September 23, 2022.

[24] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, "Mid-Year Africa Terrorism Trend and Analysis (January–June)" 2022.

[25] Ibid.

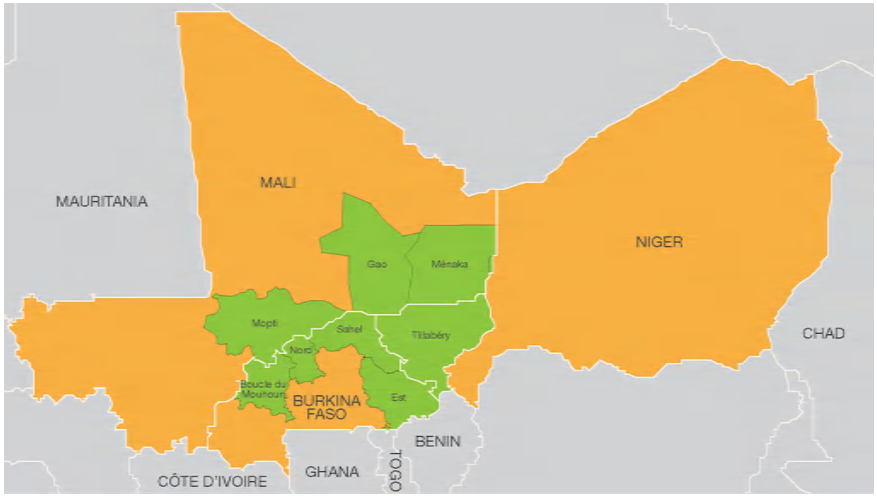

Fig. 27.3 Map of the Sahel Showing the Liptako-Gourma Tri-Border Region linking Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger shaded in Green (*Source* Assanvo)[26]

[26] William Assanvo (2019). Is organised crime fuelling terror groups in Liptako-Gourma? ISS Today. Available at https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-organised-crime-fuelling-terror-groups-in-liptako-gourma (accessed 18 December 2024).

of Chad. Reforms were however introduced in 2017 to enhance security cooperation between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in the shared bid to mitigate radicalisation, terrorism and other conflict situations in the area. Yet, the United States based Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) estimates that between 2022 and 2024, about 4,740 civilian deaths recorded in the Sahel were attributed to the operations of defence and security forces of the Sahel states in conjunction with their allied militias and private military companies.

The escalation of terrorism in the Sahel had implications for the dynamics of governance in the region and contributed to the resurgence of coups in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger which were considered an affront to ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2000). Amidst ECOWAS sanctions and threats of possible military actions to restore democratic order, the military leadership in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger reactivated the importance of the Liptako-Gourma shared consciousness in September 2023 culminating in the adoption of the Liptako-Gourma Charter establishing *L'Alliance des Etats du Sahel* (AES) as a security and defence cooperation pact.

The formation of this new security-driven alliance reinvigorated the significance of the Liptako-Gourma Authority which was established on 3 December 1970 to promote a regional framework to enhance and develop mining, energy, hydraulic, agricultural, pastoral and fisheries resources in the Liptako-Gourma border area.[27] Article 2 of the Charter identifies its prime objective as the establishment of an architecture for the collective defence and mutual assistance of the contracting parties.[28] It therefore became necessary to strengthen counterterrorism efforts of the three signatory states and muster forces to counter any external invasion of its members at a time when the threatened to use all means possible including military option to halt unconstitutional change of government in Niger and restore the overthrown administration of former President Mohamed Bazoum. On 6 July 2024, the political leadership transformed the AES into the Confederation of Sahel States. This confederation is

[27] European Council on Foreign Relations, "Mapping African Regional Cooperation: Liptako-Gourma Authority" https://ecfr.eu/special/african-cooperation/liptako-gourma-authority/ (accessed 27 December 2022).

[28] Alliance of Sahel States, Charter of the Liptako-Gourma Establishing the Alliance of Sahel States Between Burkina Faso, Republic of Mali and Republic of Niger, Bamako, 16 September 2023.

inhabited by an estimated population of 71 million, comprising mostly of young people and covers a surface area of 2,758,000 km^2 and endowed with exceptional economic potentials.[29]

Since its formation, the AES has recorded some gains in its counter-terrorism offensives. For instance, in April 2024, a joint military operation in the Menaka region of Mali, which involved troops of AES killed Abu Huzeifa, an Islamic State commander who has a $5 million bounty offered by the United States.[30] Similarly, in December 2024, a convoy of terrorists operating in the Liptako-Gourma tri-border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger conducted an operation in central Mali and fled towards Burkina Faso. Leveraging on the AES agreement, Malian troops pursued them into Burkina Faso territory beyond 10 km previously allowed in the G5 Sahel Joint Force and killed 20 of the terrorists.

Within and Beyond the Lake Chad Basin

In the Lake Chad Basin, the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria established the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with renewed mandate of the African Union to counter the threats of Boko Haram and Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) in the Lake Chad Basin area. While the Republic of Benin has no contiguous access to the lake, it however sent troops to participate in the MNJTF in solidarity with her affected neighbours. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) established a Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU) in Abuja as part of its security architecture to facilitate intelligence sharing by partners in the MNJTF. These Africa-led initiatives are, however, constrained by several internal contradictions revolving on lack of funds, porous borders which are largely under-patrolled, weak structures of governance and multiple bases of domestic grievances.

Meanwhile, as efforts were made to stem the tide of ISWAP attacks in the Lake Chad basin, the group penetrated deeper in Nigeria's hinterland

[29] Republic of Mali, Address by Colonel Abdoulaye MAIGA, Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Spokesperson for the Government of the Republic of Mali, at the General Debate of the 79th ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York, September 28, 2024.

[30] Baba Ahmed, "Mali Claims Killing Extremist Linked to 2017 Deaths of US Troops" *Military Times*, Tuesday, 30 April 2024, https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2024/04/30/mali-claims-killing-extremist-linked-to-2017-deaths-of-us-troops/ (accessed 17 December 2024).

and activated its sleeper cells. This is evidenced by revelations of Nigeria's domestic intelligence agency, the Department of State Services (DSS) after the arrest of the mastermind of the Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) attack executed in December 2022 at the palace of the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland in Okene, Kogi State. The suspects Abdulmumin Ibrahim Otaru (aka Abu Mikdad) and his accomplice named Saidu Suleiman were arrested on 3rd January 2023. The DSS described Abdulmumin Otaru as a high commander of the ISWAP who operated the group's cells within and around Kogi State.[31] Otaru's cell has also carried out some kidnap operations in Kogi and Ondo States including:

- The 24th June 2022 attack on the Nigerian Police Area Command, Eika-Ohizenyi, Okehi Local Government Area (LGA) of Kogi State in which a Police Inspector, Idris Musa was killed and two (2) AK-47 rifles stolen.
- The 5th July 2022 attack on Kuje Medium Security Custodial Centre in Kuje Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.
- The 4th August 2022 attack on the West African Ceramics Limited (WACL) in Ajaokuta LGA, Kogi State in which three Indian expatriates were kidnapped. It would be recalled that five persons including one Indian, two policemen and two drivers of the company were also killed in the attack. The kidnapped expatriates were released on 31st August 2022.[32]

Nigeria's vulnerability to terrorism was reinforced by the United States which issued a Level 3 Travel Advisory on the country in October 2022 cautioning her citizens to reconsider travels to Nigeria due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping and maritime crimes. The US Department of State was unequivocal insisting that her nationals should not travel to:

a. Abuja due to terrorism

[31] Olayemi Esan, "DSS Arrests Mastermind, Associate of Kogi Palace Bombing Suspects" *Spye News*, Wednesday 4 January, 2023, https://www.spyetv.com.ng/2023/1/dss-arrests-mastermind-associate-of.html/m=1 (accessed 5 January 2023).

[32] Ibid.

b. Borno, Yobe, Kogi and northern Adamawa States due to terrorism and kidnapping,
c. Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Zamfara states due to kidnapping,
d. Coastal areas of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers State (with the exception of Port Harcourt) due to crime, kidnapping and maritime crimes.[33]

A review of this travel alert indicates that in addition to Abuja which is Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, a total of 15 states out of the 36 states in Nigeria representing five out of the six geopolitical zones were covered in the travel advisory as only the southwest region was not included.

Beyond the advisory, the Islamic State took measures to confirm the warnings of the United States mission in Nigeria. In November 2022, the Islamic State claimed attacks at a military facility in Mallam Fatori area of Borno State in Nigeria using nine mortar shells. One of these attacks occurred as a Nigeria Air Force jet was landing after an air raid against ISWAP fighters in the area. The ISWAP fighters further attacked two Christian villages of Musakardi in Borno and Maradi in Adamawa States of Nigeria respectively.[34] The terror group claimed responsibility for the fatal terror attacks on churches in the north central city of Lokoja (Kogi State) on 17 October and 2 January 2023 in a communique it released on 3 January 2023 as follows:

> With success granted from Allah the Almighty, the soldiers of the Caliphate attacked a Christian church in the town of Lokoja, in the Kogi region, yesterday, using automatic weapons. The Mujahideen killed two of their guards while the rest fled and unto Allah is all praises.[35]

[33] United State Department of State, "Nigeria Travel Advisory" 27 October 2022; https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/nigeria-travel-advisory.html (accessed 29 November 2022).

[34] SITE: Jihadist Threat Alert, "An-Nana 367 Reveals IS Strike in Mozambique Near Previously Attacked Ruby Mine" 6 December 2022. distribution@siteintelgroup.com (accessed 25 December 2022).

[35] Site Intelligence Group, "ISWAP Escalates Operation in Kogi State with Attack on Christian Church" 4 January 2023.

The terror attacks perpetrated on Nigeria, a country with grandiose counterterrorism architecture in terms of policy, strategy and actions, indicate the enormous threats confronting the continent at large.

Horn of Africa

In the Horn of Africa, acts of terrorism perpetrated by the Al Shabaab has continued in Kenya and Somalia including military bases occupied by Burundi, Djibouti and Uganda forces during and beyond the period of the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The Al Shabaab fighters unleashed fatal attacks in Baidoa and Daynunay and other towns in the Middle Shabelle region leading to casualties.[36] In the efforts to strengthen intelligence and information sharing to counter the Al Shabaab threat in the Horn, the African Union established a Joint Fusion Liaison Union of the AMISOM and the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu to facilitate the continuous exchange of information between the AMISOM, TFG and Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs) and other stakeholders to boost collection and analysis of counterterrorism intelligence.[37] On 21 March 2022, the United Nations Security Council unanimously voted endorsing the replacement of the AMISOM with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The ATMIS has however transitioned to the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) with effect from 1 January 2025 in line with resolution 2767 of the United Nations Security Council which endorsed the AU Peace and Security Council decision establishing the AUSSOM.[38]

[36] Site Jihadist Threat Analysis, "Shabaab Maintains Momentum in Kenya while claiming Dozens of Casualties in Somalia over 5 Days" 22 December 2022, distribution@siteintelgroup.com (accessed 22 December 2022).

[37] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, "ACSRT Hand-over Communication Equipment to the AMISOM-TFG UFL" *Media Review*, 30 April 2012, https://caert.org.dz/acsrt-hands-over-communication-equipment-to-the-amisom-tfg-ufl/ (accessed 27 December 2022).

[38] African Union, (2024). Communique Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1253rd meeting held on 19 December 2024 on Briefing on the Situation in Somalia, and Post-ATMIS Security Arrangements, PSC/MIN/COMM.1253 (2024), https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1253rd-meeting-of-the-psc-on-the-situation-in-somalia-and-post-atmis-security-arrangements (accessed 25 January 2025).

The utility of fusion centres for counterterrorism intelligence sharing in Africa is also operated by the Fusion Liaison Unit of the Sahel-Sahara countries located at Tamanrasset in southern Algeria. For East Africa, Uganda was chosen to host the FLU for East Africa of Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Tanzania. This is in compliance with the resolution of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted in Nairobi Kenya at the Heads of States and Government meeting in September 2014.[39] Other counterterrorism initiatives in Africa include the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation, the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahel-Saharan region and the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army.

Beyond the Al Shabaab, the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) remains another source of terrorist threats in the Horn of Africa. The discovery of senior ISIS attack planner working in concert with several militants recruited and trained in combat tactics, kidnapping for ransom, use of quadcopters and how to hide from drone attacks among others continue to attract international interest in the region.[40] It was in response to the perceived threats of the ISS to America and her allies in the Horn of Africa that President Donald Trump ordered precision military strikes in Somalia against the Senior ISIS Attack Planner and his recruits on 1 February 2025. By this attack, Trump declared that the message to ISIS and others who would attack Americans is that, "we will find you, and we will kill you."[41] The extent to which Trump's act of strategic communication could go to mitigate terrorism in Somalia and the Horn of Africa is yet to be ascertained in view of the long-tested resilience of terrorism groups in the region.

[39] Frank Semata, "Uganda set to establish a Regional Fusion and Liaison Unit to combat Terrorism" *East Africa Business Week* 13 November 2019, https://www.busiweek.com/uganda-set-to-establish-a-regional-fusion-and-liaison-unit-to-combat-terrorism/ (accessed 27 December 2022).

[40] The Associated Press, "US Military Conducts Airstrikes Against Islamic State Operatives in Somalia" 1 February, 2025, https://www.yahoo.com/news/us-military-conducts-airstrikes-against-205059012.html?fr=sycsrp_catchall (accessed 2 February 2025).

[41] Donald Trump on X-Handle, @realDonaldTrump 6:20 pm 1 February 2025.

Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, a region that appeared largely insulated from terrorist attacks, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the killing of five soldiers of the pro-government militia members near the village of Yoroto village in the Montepuez district of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. Prior to this incident, the group had attacked a ruby mine operated by the Gemrock company in Mozambique two weeks earlier.[42] The point here is that the threats of terrorism have continued to ravage peace and security across the continent despite the concert of efforts at counterterrorism.

Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Africa's credentials as the emerging epicentre of global terrorism is further enhanced by its vulnerability as a base for the recruitment and training of terrorists, some of whom fight across international borders as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). The African Union estimates that over 50,000 FTFs from more than 100 countries travelled to Iraq, Libya and Syria within the second decade of the twenty-first century to fight alongside ISIS, of which about 7,000 went from North Africa and later returned to unleash terror in the region.[43] Since 2018, the African Union's Peace and Security Council has expressed concerns on the growing influx of FTFs into Africa and the imminent threats they constitute to peace and security in the continent. This is because their presence complicates the terrorism landscape in Africa in particular and international peace and security in general. These FTFs are specifically present in the Sahel-Sahara belt cutting across Central Africa, West Africa and the Horn of Africa extending down to Mozambique in Southern Africa. It is therefore glaring that no region in Africa is spared of the menace of FTFs.

At intervals, terrorist groups in Africa have hinged their attacks on the perception that African countries collaborate with extra-continental

[42] SITE: Jihadist Threat Alert, "An-Nana 367 Reveals IS Strike in Mozambique Near Previously Attacked Ruby Mine" 6 December 2022. distribution@siteintelgroup.com (accessed 25 December 2022).

[43] African Union, Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the Sahel-Sahara region of Africa: Recommendations for Stemming a Long Lasting Threat" AU/PAPS/ACSRT/PP/001 Policy Paper, April 2022, https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/policy-paper-ftfs200522-foreign-terrorist-fighters-in-the-sahel-sahara-rigion-of-africa.pdf (accessed 25 December 2022).

power in counterterrorism operations. The attack on Grand Bassam in Cote d'Ivoire was linked to the perception that Cote d'Ivoire is a close partner of France in its counterterrorism operations in Mali. Yet, there exists further perceptions that the network of international terrorism involving Africa and the rest of the world could be facilitated by the existence of a large population of Lebanese entrepreneurs who though may be doing legitimate businesses in Africa, however, have significant links with the western-discredited Hezbollah structures in Beirut such that their proceeds of business could be diverted to fund the Hezbollah aggressions in the Middle East.

Unconstitutional Changes of Government

An analysis of terrorism in Africa since the aftermath of the Arab Spring also reveals the connection between terrorism and unconstitutional change of government, especially military coups and mass uprisings across Africa. In February 2011, the Egyptian military intervened as the last bastion of national defence to prevent lawlessness and political chaos by replacing President Hosni Mubarak who had been in power since 1981. Similarly, after the restoration of democratic order in 2012, the military later intervened, overthrew the civilian administration of Mohammed Morsi on 3 July 2013 and suspended the constitution in the bid to avert the autocratic tendencies of the Morsi administration and its predisposition to repress the opposition to the advantage of the ruling Muslim Brotherhood which had extremist orientation. In the crackdown to contain the violent protests by the Muslim Brotherhood against the dethronement of Morsi, the interim authority led by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi killed about 1,000 people in what it considered a struggle against terrorism.[44]

Since the Arab Spring, the armed forces of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have intervened in politics, attempting to overpower the weak political structures that had failed to protect civilians against the Al-Qaeda and Islamic State attacks. Such occurrences have become direct contradictions of extant protocols against unconstitutional change of government at the regional and continental levels such as the Lome Convention of

[44] British Broadcasting Corporation, "Egypt's Mohammed Morsi: A Turbulent Presidency Cut Short" *BBC News* 17 June 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-18371427 (accessed 20 October 2024).

12 July 2000 which embodies the Declaration on the Framework for the OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa. These coups further contravene the 2001 ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in Dakar. The resurgence of military coups further contravenes the 2022 Accra Declaration of the African Union (AU) which rejected unconstitutional change of government. The AU consolidated its concerns on terrorism and coups with the Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa adopted at the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 28 May 2022. Drawing from the above, it can be inferred that effective counterterrorism offensives are increasingly considered a useful tool for sustainable democratic governance in Africa.

Numerous Non-state Armed Groups

The existence of numerous Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) some of these groups are inspired by extra-continental influences from global jihadi networks outside Africa further facilitate and sustain acts of terrorism in Africa. Among the ranks of NSAG are various which include terrorist cells, separatist groups, bandits and armed militias such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Ansar Dine, Macina Liberation Front (MLF) and the Al Mourabitoum and the Al Shabaab al-Mujahidin, AQIM, ISCAP, ISWAP, ISGS, ISS and the JNIM. Others are the separatist groups like the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in Mali and the some pro-Ambazonia fighting groups in Cameroon whose operations are supported by some African diaspora groups and individuals.

Fragile State Syndrome

To understand the persistence of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, an appreciation of the dynamics of fragile state syndrome in the continent is necessary as several African states are weak and unable to effectively perform the full tasks of governance. As observed by former Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General/Head, United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Dr Ibn Chambas, the fragility of states in Africa has rendered the component states unable to project and manage power for the protection of

its people, its borders and chunk of internal territory.[45] For instance, between 2016 and 2020, more than 4,000 deaths have been recorded in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger as a result of terrorism as against 770 deaths in 2016 and this represents a fivefold increase in statistics.[46]

The prevalence of fragile states especially in sub-Saharan Africa heightens the vulnerability of African countries to terrorism especially in an epoch when the global terrorist networks are actively engaged in the quest for space to strengthen their existence. In the Sahel belt, the Liptako-Gourma region of Burkina Faso and Mali that links with the Tillaberi region of Niger where the ISGS and JNIM have repeatedly unleashed acts of terrorism since 2020. Similarly, the shared border areas of the Lake Chad basin linking Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria remain vulnerable to Boko Haram/ISWAP. This also relates to the shared border area between Nigeria Southern Cameroon characterised by vast mountains, thick forests and creeks which Ambazonia fighting groups have exploited to facilitate their struggle for independence from the Cameroon state.

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Linked to the fragile state syndrome is the prevalence of several Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) in Africa which are also ranked low

[45] Mohammed ibn Chambas, "Governance and Fragility" Keynote address to the IEG-UNECA Conference on "Engaging with Fragile States: Challenges and Opportunities" Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July 24–25, 2007.

[46] Mohammed ibn Chambas, "Unprecedented terrorist violence in West Africa, Sahel region" *United Nations News*, 1 January 2020, https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1054981 (accessed 18 September 2022).

in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). Several of these countries are also poor in the Global Peace Index (GPI), Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Fragile State Index (FSI) and Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The point here is that several African states lack the capacity for inclusive mobilisation of the population and transparency in the management of scarce natural resources while their citizens lack the capacities to serve as republican partners and watchdog on the political leadership. These scenarios create an enabling environment for a cross-section of the population to nurse deep grievances that are actively mobilised for radicalisation and recruitment for terrorism.

Porous and Undergoverned Spaces

Terrorist groups in Africa also continue to exploit the numerous porous and under-patrolled borders to facilitate their operations and access to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) estimates that about 70% of terrorist attacks in Africa are perpetrated through the use of SALWs.[47] The illicit transfer, circulation and trafficking of SALWs continue to play destabilising roles in Africa and frustrate the continental efforts of silencing the guns. Since the bulk of SALWs within Africa are acquired from the international market, there is heightened need for more concerted efforts at national, regional and international levels to address their proliferation. This also relates to the shared border area between Nigeria Southern Cameroon characterised by vast mountains, thick forests and creeks which Ambazonia fighting groups have exploited to facilitate their struggle for independence from the Cameroon state. The violent collapse of the Ghadaffi-led regime in Libya opened the floodgates of illicit access to SALWs in Africa, and thus emphasised the imperative need of the global community to continue its collaboration efforts in the search for peace in post-Gaddafi Libya.

Africa's porous and under-governed spaces in Africa provide sanctuaries which terrorist groups take advantages of, to recruit and train members. It also serves as platforms to move logistics supplies and base for strategic planning purposes. It is therefore not an over-statement to

[47] African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Op. Cit.

assert under-governed spaces especially along shared border areas has become another governance issue requiring significant considerations for counterterrorism. The continued attractiveness and vulnerability of such border areas to terrorist groups demands border management interventions such as the development of border communities and use of modern border management information tools by border control agencies such as the Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS).

In the Sahel belt, the Liptako-Gourma region of Burkina Faso and Mali that links with the Tillaberi region of Niger where the ISGS and JNIM have repeatedly unleashed acts of terrorism since 2020 constitutes a case in point. Similarly, the shared border areas of the Lake Chad basin linking Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria remain vulnerable to Boko Haram/ISWAP. This also relates to the shared border area between Nigeria and the former British Southern Cameroons characterised by vast geographical terrains of mountains and thick forests and network of creeks and coastlines which elements of the Ambazonia fighting groups have exploited to facilitate their struggle for independence from the Cameroon state.

To mitigate the risks of exploiting porous borders by fleeing terrorists, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) responded to the 11 July 2024 jail break at the Koutoukala prison in the Republic of Niger by issuing a circular instructing all Comptrollers of Commands of formations along Niger-Nigerian border to be red alert following the "escape of hundreds of terrorists, criminals and drug traffickers" and to tract all suspicious movements leading to the arrest of any such escapee.[48] The NIS took this measure as it anticipates that such criminal elements could sneak into Nigeria to join other terrorist gangs to perpetrate mayhem in Nigeria. It is instructive to note that before the emergence of the Islamic State, prisons in Iraq were broken and several experienced terrorist fighters were freed. The escape of over 500 inmates from the Abu Ghraib prison in west Baghdad in July 2013 is considered one of the key moments in the rise

[48] Nigeria Immigration Service, "Mass Prison Break in Niger Republic: Hundreds of International Terror Kingpins Escapes" *Circular* with reference NIS/HQ/BMD/S/1208/2/162 dated 12 July 2024.

of the Islamic State.[49] The Boko Haram also leveraged on prison attacks for recruitment of its fighters during its peak between 2011 and 2015.

The threats of terrorism in Africa has stimulated some increases in defence and security-related expenditures. Available statistics from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicate that African countries experienced an increase in the military expenditures above $43,000 million in 2020 which corresponds to a 5.1% and 11% increase when compared to the 2019 and 2011 statistics respectively.[50] Ironically, the growth in defence and security expenditures were to the detriment of health and social security needs of the population which also continues to grow. In other words, the escalation of terrorism in Africa resulted in the corresponding diversion of scarce national resources for public investments needed to boost education, health, agricultural and other core socio-economic sectors, to the procurement of military and security hardware and gadgets. Ironically, such counterterrorism responses tend to sustain public discontent, frustrations and youth restiveness which sometimes deepen socio-economic hardship and render the gullible population more vulnerable to recruitment and radicalisation for terrorism and violent extremism.

It is considered necessary to assert at this point that the persistence of terrorism in Africa is not due to the absence of relevant legal and institutional frameworks against terrorism. The commitment of African leaders to exorcise the spectre of terrorism from Africa is elaborated in the strong political will expressed in the Malabo Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Change of Government adopted at Equatorial Guinea in May 2022 as well as the resolutions reached at the Abuja High Level Counterterrorism Meeting held in Nigeria in April 2024. To this effect, the AU continues to sustain measures targeted at development-focused counterterrorism which include:

[49] Agence France Press, "Inmates Flee, Dozens Killed in Iraq Prison Break Claimed by IS Group" 9 May 2015, https://www.france24.com/en/20150509-inmates-flee-dozens-killed-iraq-prison-break-claimed-group (accessed 24 November 2024).

[50] Agenzia Fides, "Africa - Instability in the Sahel causes a sharp rise in military spending" Information Service of the Pontifical Mission Society, Rome, 2022; www.fides.org/en/news/71429-AFRICA_Instability_in_the_Sahel_causes_a_sharp_rise_in_military_spending (accessed 18 September 2022).

- Revitalization of the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes on intelligence gathering and sharing.
- Refocusing the African Union Counter-Terrorism Centre (AUCTC) and reclassifying it as a Centre of Excellence embracing the whole of society and whole of government approach.
- Fostering regional and continental efforts in combating terrorism under the I-RECKE for early warning and conflict prevention.
- Elaboration of a new Continental Strategic Plan of Action to ensure that inter and intra-regional counterterrorism is sustainable.
- Collaborative approach at the national and regional levels to address the use of new technologies and financing methods by terrorists and violent extremist.
- Empowering local institutions, fostering regional cooperation and prioritising socio-economic development in the bid to effectively address the root causes of terrorism and build resilient communities.[51]

Various African states have also enacted requisite national legislations and established basic institutional mechanisms relevant to the war against terrorism at respective national levels and are signatories to various regional, continental and global treaty documents against terrorism. However, the failure of African states to effectively implement extant counterterrorism instruments and partnerships is continuously exploited by terrorist groups to unleash audacious attacks in Africa. It is therefore necessary that concerted efforts are made to strengthen the Counterterrorism and Counter-Insurgency (CTCOIN) capacities of various African states, respective Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union leveraging on national capabilities and supports of strategic partners.

[51] Adeoye, B. (2025). "African-led and Development-focused Counterterrorism: Strengthening African Leadership and Implementation of Counterterrorism Initiatives" Remarks by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner Political Affairs, Peace and Security at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate in New York, 21 January.

Prognosis

The existence and increasing operations of the Al-Qaeda Network and Islamic State linked groups in Africa have contributed to the intensification of acts of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. Thus, despite the successive killing of Osama ibn Laden at Abbottabad, Pakistan, in May 2011 and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at Barisha, Syria, in October 2019, Africa keeps providing sanctuaries of support and logistics bases that sustain domestic and international terrorism.

The Islamic State continues to earn the allegiance (bay'ah) from armed fighters in Africa even after the killing of al-Baghdadi' successor, Amir Muhammad Said AbdalRahman al Mawla, known as Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quarayshi in February 2022. The Africa-based fighters also pledged support to Abu al-Hasan al-Hashmi al-Qurayshi who emerged as leader in March 2022 and remained committed to his direction until October when he was killed in operations of the Free Syria Army in the Dar'aa province of Syria.[52] Subsequently, the Islamic State continues to expand and establish new provinces (*Wilayat*) across Africa with active presence in Libya, Egypt (the Sinai Peninsula), West Africa (around the Lake Chad, Sahel (Greater Sahara), Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (Central Africa province) and Mozambique (Ansar al-Sunna wa Jamma) (Fig. 27.4).

There total fatality recorded in Africa from the 971 terrorist attacks in Africa claimed by the Islamic State in 2024 was 3,702 when compared to 5,790 fatalities recorded from 1,410 claimed attacks by the Islamic State from its global operations as at 19 December 2024.[53] The Sahel accounted for over half of all terrorist attacks perpetrated by both the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda within Africa in 2024.[54]

[52] Eyad Kourdi, "ISIS Acknowledges the Death of its Leader, Announces his Successor" *Cable News Network*, 30 November 2022, https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/30/middleeast/isis-leader-dies-intl/index.html (accessed 23 January 2023); Also see, The Wilson Centre, "ISIS Leader Killed in U.S Raid in Syria" 4 February 2022, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/microsite/8/node/109340 (accessed 23 January 2023).

[53] Kathryn Tyson and Liam Karr, *Op. Cit.*

[54] Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, December 2024, *Op. Cit.*

Islamic State Affiliates and Pro–Islamic State Groups in Africa Pledge Allegiance to a New Leader: December 2022
Countries Where IS Operates
Islamic State in Tunisia
IS Libya Province
IS Sinai Province
IS Somalia Province
IS Sahel Province
IS West Africa Province
IS Central Africa Province
IS Mozambique Province
Bold Text: Official IS Affiliates That Pledged Allegiance to the New IS Leader in December 2022
Italicized Text: Pro-IS Groups That Pledged Allegiance to the New IS Leader in December 2022
Map: Critical Threats Project • Source: Kathryn Tyson, Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 27.4 Islamic State Presence in Africa (*Source* Kathryn Tyson & Liam Karr)[55]

[55] Kathryn Tyson & Liam Karr, *Op. Cit.*

Resurgence of Coups in Africa

It is pertinent to now consider emerging trends that could have significant implications for the future of terrorism in Africa. A series of recent coups in the Sahel has produced new regimes invulnerable countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger and the Republic of Guinea. Raging diplomatic row between France and the military governments in Ouagadougou, Bamako and Niamey, and the accompanying expulsion of French envoys remains instructive as France coordinated the counterterrorism alliance tagged, Operation Barkhane. The consequence was the withdrawal of Operation Barkhane, cessation of Operation Takuba Task Force (TTF) established in March 2020, by European Union countries under the command of Operation Barkhane in less than two years after its launch and the withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) which suffered about 275 fatalities, all heightened anxieties on the future of the Sahel and adjoining regions.[56] The initial reassurances by Macron that about 3,000 French troops will remain to support Burkina Faso in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism was degraded on 11 January 2023 when the Government of Burkina Faso issued a directive in which France was given 30 days to withdraw her troops from the country thereby deepening the prevailing anxieties.[57]

As the diplomatic feud that accompanied the emergence of military regimes in the Sahel, the Governments of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger demanded the withdrawal of French military presence in their respective territories. France has therefore withdrawn its troops from the AES states and the Government of Chad has recently signalled interest for the cessation of military pact from its territory. Chad's Foreign Minister, Abderaman Koulamallah, announced the Ndjamena's intention through a

[56] The Soufan Centre, "IntelBrief: French Withdrawal from Mali Leaves UN Peace Operations Vulnerable" *IntelBrief* 15 November 2022; https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2022-november-15/ (accessed 27 November 2022).

[57] Government of Burkina Faso, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation No. 2023 -025/MAECRBE/CAB, Ouagadougou, 11 January 2023; Also see, *Ceylon Today* "Burkina Faso demands Departure of French Troops" News, Monday, 23 January 2023.

Communique of the Ministry of External Affairs, Integration and Cooperation in Africa.[58] By implication, with the exception of Mauritania, four of the five countries that were partners in the G5 Sahel are actively committed to the end of French military presence in their countries and portend increased Russian defence cooperation through the Africa Corp. Like with France, the AES countries also remain opposed to US interference in their respective national politics and this has also been accompanied with the withdrawal of US troops in their jurisdictions.

In a related development, following the successful military coup in the Republic of Niger and accompanying diplomatic row with the United States, the ruling National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland, led by Brigadier General Abdourahamane Tiani, issued ultimatum to the United States to shut down its military bases in the country and withdraw its troops. This was the consequence of perceived incompatibility the new regime's existence with Washington DC's rejection of the military coup in the country. The Biden administration in Washington DC formally considers the overthrow of the Mohamed Bazoum administration by the military as a coup which imposed constraints on the United States Government to continue supporting Niger with any significant military and foreign assistance. The United States had maintained two major military bases in Niger notably, the Airbase 101 in Niamey and Air Base 201 in Agadez.

Further tensions between Niger and the United States ensued following disagreements at the meetings between representatives of the United States and Niger's military government over Niger's preparedness to supply Iran with uranium and expressed its willingness to collaborate closely with Russian military forces. Niger resolved to end American military presence in the country to carve a way for less restrictive international engagements.[59] This development came as the insecurities associated with terrorist activities of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State persist in the Sahel. The withdrawal of US troops and closure of both air bases has significant implications for United States counterterrorism efforts in West Africa as

[58] Republic of Chad, Ministry of External Affairs, Integration and Cooperation in Africa, *Press Release*, No. 05354/MAEIACITE/DC/2024, N'djamena, 28 November, 2024.

[59] Carla Babb, "United States Completes Withdrawal from Last Base in Niger" *Voice of America,* 5 August 2024, https://www.voanews.com/a/us-completes-withdrawal-from-last-base-in-niger/7730618.html (accessed 20 October 2024).

they will need to find new bases in the region or contend with operating surveillance drones from far away Djibouti or Italy to cover West Africa.

The exit of France and the United States from Sahel raises new security concerns within and beyond the region bearing in mind that counterterrorism engagement requires international cooperation especially as individual countries in the Sahel that lack the capacity to singlehandedly combat terrorism within their respective jurisdictions. Importantly, despite the enhanced engagement of Russia's Wagner group (now Africa Corp) filled the political vacuum left by the United States troops, MINUSMA, France and the European Union partners in the Sahel. Casualties from a recent conflict showcase Russia's involvement: about 47 Malian soldiers and 84 Wagner mercenaries were killed in ambush by Tuareg rebels operating in the Tinzawatene area of Kidal in July 2024 in carefully coordinated rebel operations.[60]

Further anxieties on terrorist threats in the Sahel emerged from bold allegations by the political leadership of the Confederation of Sahel States that France was working through certain neighbouring countries to sustain insecurities in the Sahel to destabilise the military regimes.[61] In a communique issued at the end of its meeting in Bamako in December 2024, the College of Heads of States of the Confederation of Sahel States declared as follows:

> The College of Heads of State notes with regrets that within ECOWAS, destabilization maneuvers are regularly initiated by a handful of Heads of States who impose their desires and foreign agendas on the rest of the organisation… The College of Heads of States is following with great attention the deceptive maneuver initiated by the French junta, under the pretext of closing its military bases in some African countries, only to replace them with a less visible mechanism pursuing the same neo-colonial ambitions. In addition to these activities, there are operations to reorganise and regroup terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel and some border zones: Niger-Nigeria, Niger-Benin, Niger-Burkina, Benin-Burkina. These groups receive various forms of supports

[60] "Ukraine Denies Involvement in Mali Attack, Says Cutting of Diplomatic Ties Shortsighted" *The Irish Times*, Monday 5 August 2024.

[61] Confederation of Sahel States, "Statement by the College of Heads of States of the Confederation of Sahel State, Bamako, 22 December 2024.

> from foreign states, including financial and logistical resources, with a view to destabilizing the AES.[62]

The declaration by the College of Heads of States raises key issue that is often neglected in terrorism discourses and specifically how the foreign policy of major extra-continental powers interacts to contain or escalate terrorism in Africa. The accompanying curiosities are further buttressed by the consequences of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's role in the anti-Ghaddafi rebellion during the Arab Spring in Libya as the violent collapse of the Ghaddafi regime weakened central control of Libya's territory and armoury which became more readily accessible to terrorist groups in Africa.

Speaking on the activities of various International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and donor agencies with active interest and operations in Nigeria's northeast, the country's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Christopher Musa categorically drew attention to concerns on the funding and logistic supplies to terrorists operating in the area. He noted these groups have sustained their operations despite over a decade of sustained military operations and cordon off mounted by the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies engaged in Counterterrorism and Counter-Insurgency (CTCOIN) operations and also categorically stressed with certainty the probability of international conspiracy to sustain terrorism-related insecurity in Nigeria by enemies of the country.[63] Of specific concern was the intermittent allegations of human rights violations levelled against Nigerian troops at periods when Nigeria's defence and security forces are making remarkable progress in the CTCOIN operations, noting that such ill-conceived allegations pose negative effects on the morale of troops in theatre areas to the detriment of effective combat operations.[64] The Amnesty International is considered complicit here raising questions on whose interests their allegations of human rights violations exist to serve bearing in mind that there exists active presence of United Nations and other international agencies in

[62] Ibid.

[63] Al Jazeera, "Nigeria's Defence Chief on Human Rights Abuse Report and Security" *Talk To Al Jazeera*, 5 January, 2025, https://www.aljazeera.com/program/talk-to-al-jazeera/2025/1/5/nigerias-defence-chief-on-human-rights-abuse-reports-and-security (accessed 13 January 2025).

[64] Ibid.

theatre areas and are also complicit in the allegations since they fail to report such violations.[65] It is instructive to note that these observations by General Musa have added impetus to the raging concerns on foreign interest and sponsorship of terrorist activities in the Lake Chad Basin.

Resilience of Terrorist Groups

The continued execution of audacious acts of terrorism by the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) have sustained the growing anxieties on the capabilities of the Sahelian states to combat terrorism. The JNIM claimed that it attacked the Forces Armee du Mali (FAMa) or the Malian Armed Forces in Yelimane in November 2022 while also announcing that it has established a presence in western Mali. It justified the operation to be in the support of the religion and defence of the oppressed as well as a blow to the Government of Mali for its rampant injustice.[66] The JNIM made the announcements through a communique issued in Arabic on 2 December 2022 by the Al-Zallaga Foundation which serves as the central Al-Qaeda media unit in the Sahel. These events have raised new concerns on the future of counterterrorism in the Sahel, especially in Mali where it was established to address the pseudo-jihadi threat. The concerns persist despite the Government's introduction of Private Military Contractors (PMC) from Russia such as the Wagner Group to support its operation in the Sahel.

The resilience of the Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) in Africa that engage in acts of terrorism in the pursuit of their objectives is sustained by the supports from their local and foreign collaborators. Separatist groups such as the pro-Ambazonia armed groups in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon which deploy terrorist acts in pursuit of their objective of independence have proven resilient. Among these are the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) and the Ambazonia Restoration Forces (ARFs). Tuareg armed groups in the Sahel have also demonstrated remarkable resilience through new initiative that strengthen unity in pursuit of the Azawad goal has led to the adoption of *Pacte d'Honneur Pour L'Unite Du Peuple De L'Azawad* at Tinzaouaten, and accompanying establishment of

[65] Ibid.

[66] SITE Jihadist Threat Alert, "JNIM Attacks FAMa in Kayes, Boasts Entry into Western Mali Yet Again" 3 December 2022; distribution@siteintelgroup.com (accessed 25 December 2022).

the *Front de Liberation de l'Azawad* (FLA), that is, Azawad Liberation Front on 30 November 2024. The FLA was established under the pact as a unified response to counter the violence perpetrated by the Armed Forces of Mali and its allies.

The four contracting groups are Le Haut Counseil Pour l'Unite de l'Azawad (HCUA), (c.) Le Mouvement National pour la Liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA), Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (MAA) and the Le Groupe d'Autodefense Touareg Imghad et Allies (GATIA). The emergence of the FLA could constitute the local allies of extra-continental powers seeking to destabilise the domestic and foreign policy assertiveness of the military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in the desperate bid to frustrate Russia's growing influence in the Sahel.

Lakurawa Threat

The intensification of collaboration by the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in the Tillaberi Liptako-Gourma area has introduced new dimensions to terrorist movements in Nigeria's northwest shared border with the Republic of Niger. One such terrorist threat is the Lakurawa armed group whose formation was traced to former military Head of State in Niger, Ibrahim Bare Mainassara who established it as a vigilante formation to aid security apparatus but after his death, the group was neglected as members roamed across the border. This southward movement of the Lakurawa has expanded the shift of terrorist groups from the Sahel to coastal states of West Africa.

The Lakurawa militant group is not entirely new to Nigeria's space. In 2018, the group infiltrated Nigeria and established camps in Gudu and Tangaza Local Government Areas of Sokoto State. The Government of Sokoto State realised the threats associated with the Lakurawa and initiated negotiations to expel them. While the faction that originated from Mali agreed to leave, the faction from Niger opted to remain and operate within Nigeria. However, with the intensification of military offensives of the AES have shifted down from southern Mali and Niger to bordering communities of Kebbi and Sokoto states in northwest Nigeria where it established camps in villages such as Gwanaguano, Mulawa, Wassinya and Turigaic communities.

By November 2024, when the Armed Forces of Nigeria effectively confronted and expelled them, the Lakurawa had spread its activities to 10

LGAs in Sokoto and Kebbi States as follows: Tangaza, Gudu, Ilela, Gwadabawa, Kware, Silame and Binji in Sokoto in addition to Augie, Kangiwa and Argungu in Kebbi State. The group had killed several Nigerians and was allegedly offering incentive of up to N1,000,000 to vulnerable population willing to be recruited into terrorism. While Nigeria's defence and security forces have sufficiently degraded Lakurawa's strength and assets, there still exists rationale anxieties and speculations that the group has permanently eclipsed from Nigeria and this justifiably requires sustained vigilance and actions. Some of its known leaders are Ahmadu Kofa, Abu Khadijah, Abdulrahaman Idi, Dadi Gumba, Muhammed Abu, Usman Shehu, Abu Yusuf, Musa Walia, Ibrahim Suyaka, Ba Sulhu and Idris Taklakse.[67]

The resurgence of the Lakurawa along Niger-Nigeria borders emerged a sore point in the bilateral relations between both countries. This is because, it provided basis for accusations by Niger's military Head of State, General Abdourahmane Tchiani in December 2024 that Nigeria was colluding with France to undermine the security of Niger, an allegation Nigeria and the ECOWAS has refuted.[68] It is instructive to note that looming diplomatic row between Niger and Nigeria portends immense danger for both neighbouring countries as terrorists and cross-border criminals could exploit the situation to deepen insecurity within their respective jurisdiction, including the Sahel and Lake Chad basin.

Terrorist Attack at Barkaram

Furthermore, the terrorist attack on Chadian defence and security forces at Barkaram in the west of Ngouboua under Kaya Department of Lac province by terrorists on Sunday 27 October 2024 has clearly pronounced the resilience of the Islamic State in West Africa province and further

[67] Animasahun Salman, Ismaeel Uthman and Solomon Odeniyi, "How Lukarawa Terrorist Operate in 10 Sokoto, Bauchi Council Areas" *Punch* 17 November 2024; https://punch.com/how-lukarawa-terrorists-operate-in-10-sokoto-bauchi-council-areas/ (accessed 24 November 2024).

[68] Yusuf Akinpelu, "Nigeria Denies Colluding with France to Destabilise Niger" *BBC News*, 27 December 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpq9x94gj2no (accessed 7 January 2025).

raised concerns on the effectiveness of national and sub-regional counterterrorism efforts.[69] In its reaction to the incident, the Presidency in Chad launched the Operation Haskanite to track down the attackers, crush the sect in their last hiding place and avenge the martyrs.[70] The Government of Chad also announced that the Government of Chad was considering withdrawal from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), giving the absence of gains of the international cooperation on ground.[71]

The implications of Chad's withdrawal from the MNJTF could have far reaching consequences of the joint Counterterrorism and Counter-Insurgency (CTCOIN) operations against the Boko Haram and ISWAP elements in the Lake Chad Basin area. Chad host the Headquarters Command of the MNJTF and the country's defence and security assets possess long history of combat operations in the theatre area which is strategic to the mission. Moreover, the combat architecture or Order of Battle (ORBAT) of the MNJTF covers a critical geographic spread that compliment efforts of other regional actors and Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs) such as Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Benin. It is therefore important to retain the commitment of Chad and all TCCs to the joint fight against terrorism by the MNJTF.

Spread of Terrorism to Southern Africa

With the penetration of Cabo Delgado area Mozambique by former Al Shabaab fighters which fled from counterterrorism offensive in Tanzania, acts of terrorism intensified hit Southern Africa region which hitherto seemed isolated from the scourge of terrorism ravaging other parts of the continent.[72] It is these extremists that purportedly formed the nucleus

[69] Republique du Chad, Ministere des Affaires Estrangeres, de l'Integration Africaine, des Tchadiens de L'Estranger et de la Cooperation Internationale, N°5011/PR/PM/MAELATECI/2024, dated 27 October 2024; Also see Republique du Chad, "Communique de Presse" Direction Generale de la Communication, N°014/PR/CAB/DGCOM/2024, dated 28 October 2024 at Ndjamena.

[70] Republique du Tchad, Direction Generale de la Communication, N°015/PR/CAB/DGCOM/ "Communique de Presse" dated 3 November 2024 at Bagassola.

[71] Ibid.

[72] C. Nna-Emeka Okereke, "Countering Terrorism Insurgency and Violent Extremism in Africa" Paper presented at the virtual roundtable organised by the Africa Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) on "upsurge in violent extremism across Africa: Interrogating capacity deficits" held on Thursday, 3rd June 2021.

of what later emerged as the Islamic State linked groups threatening Mozambique thereby heightening the risks of terrorism in Southern Africa.

As the Islamic State incursion into Mozambique's territory persists, the neighbouring Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland) which shares contiguous land borders and which many of its citizens already hold domestic grievances against the ruling monarchy takes the terrorist threat in Mozambique as a serious security concern of national and regional importance. It is reasoned that the spread of the Islamic State to Mozambique have strong implications for peace and security in Southern Africa. It therefore calls for sustained regional cooperation by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

The Return of the Taliban in Afghanistan

Meanwhile, the return of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan after two decades of struggle against the United States and its allies has further deepened the anxieties for Africa where countries like Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Egypt and Burkina Faso still struggle against terrorism and Islamist insurgencies. The anxieties come naturally, bearing in mind the historical linkages between trends in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) with sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations notes the links between the Al-Qaeda Network which controls several cells in Africa and the Taliban regime which was strengthened by the killing of Ayman Al-Zawahiri by a drone strike at Afghan capital, in Kabul on 31 July 2022. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Gueterres therefore warns of the possible proliferation of the Islamic State throughout Africa following the situation in Afghanistan.[73] This has further strengthened speculations that the triumph of the Taliban could spur the Al Shabaab, Boko Haram, JNIM and the ISGS to sustain and intensify their assaults within the continent. It is therefore important for African governments especially in countries with active pro-Salafi insurgent groups. Terrorist threat in Africa is further heightened by the audacious resilience exhibited by various terrorist groups despite the continuous counterterrorism efforts made at national, regional and continental levels.

[73] Isaac Kaledzi, "Taliban Triumph Means More Worries for Africa" *Deutsche Welle* 18 August 2021, https://www.dw.com/en/taliban-triumph-means-more-worries-in-africa/a-58898090 (accessed 27 January 2023).

The threats of terrorism in Africa is further heightened by the resilience exhibited by various terrorist groups in the continent who despite the such counterterrorism efforts at national, regional and continental levels have continued to operate. Today, no region in Africa is spared of terrorist attacks as the Al-Qaeda Network and the Islamic States continue to expand their reach across the continent. The multiplicity of these Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) and the increasing ease with which they access SALWs in Africa will continue to sustain terrorism in the continent. This is supported by the fact that the bulk of terrorist acts in Africa are perpetrated through the use of SALWs and their ready availability tends to sustain the incidence of terrorism across the continent. It is therefore logical to assert that the audacious acts of terrorism could persist in Africa within the next decade. This prognosis has further been demonstrated by the Islamic State Somalia (ISS) attack at a military base in Bari district of Puntland on 31st December using a combination of Suicide Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (SVBIED) and Suicide Vests (SVEST) and resulted to the death of 18 Puntland Security Forces (PSFs) and nine ISS fighters.[74] Similarly, the Boko Haram attacked at the Sabon Gida base of Nigeria Army troops in Damboa, Borno State, on 4 January 2025 resulting in the death of six soldiers and 34 Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists.[75] The resilience of the Boko Haram was demonstrated by the group's attack on the 149 Battalion in Malam Fatori, headquarter of Abadam Local Government Area (LGA), exactly two days after killing of 20 fishermen at Gadan Gari fishing community in Bama LGA, all in Borno State.[76] Malam Fatori is a border community between Niger and

[74] Kathryn Tyson and Liam Karr, "Africa File, January 9, 2025: Islamic State Suicide Attack in Somalia: AUSSOM Dysfunction; M23 Captures District Capital in Eastern DRC" *Institute for the Study of Wars*, 9 January 2025, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/africa-file-january-9-2025-islamic-state-suicide-attack-somalia-aussom-dysfunction-m23 (accessed 12 January 2025).

[75] Deutsche Welle (DW), "Nigerian Military Says 6 Soldiers Killed in Boko Haram Clash" 8 January 2025, https://www.dw.com/en/nigerian-military-says-6-soldiers-killed-in-boko-haram-clash/a-71246536 (accessed 12 January 2025). Also see, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, "President Tinubu Extends Sympathy to the Military Over the Recent Attack on the Nigerian Army Base in Damboa, Borno State" *State House Press Release*, 9 January 2025.

[76] Francis Okoye, "Days After Killing 20 Fishermen, Boko Haram Kills Army Commander, 19 Soldiers in Borno" *Leadership*, 25 January 2025, https://leadership.ng/days-after-killing-20-fishermen-boko-haram-kills-army-commander-19-soldiers-in-borno/ (accessed 25 January 2025).

Nigeria. Since March 2025, the ISWAP launched attacks in Wajiroko, Kumshe and Katafila areas of Southern Borno and by May, it attacked a military camp in Buni Gari under the 27 Task Force Brigade of the Operation HADIN-KAI in Nigeria's northeast. Towns and villages in Marte, Dikwa and Rann experienced coordinated attacks of the ISWAP in May 2025. As the rainy season approached, the ISWAP resorted to the use of IEDs in the theatre area targeting the Borno town of Damboa and Konduga in May and June 2025. A coordinated attack on the 19 Brigade near Damboa was repelled by troops of Operation HADIN-KAI. Further act of terrorism was experienced on 18 June when ISWAP fighters attacked Nigerian Navy base at Lake Chad Fish Dam, Baga, Borno State targeting newly acquired swamp bogeys procured by the State Government to facilitate clearance operations in the water ways of the Lake Chad. A combination of land, air and maritime components of troops in Sector 3 Multinational Joint Task Force/Operation HADIN-KAI successfully repelled the attack while inflicting heavy casualties on the terrorists. This attack is also linked to a retaliation of the ISWAP over the killing of its commander, Abu Fatima by troops of Operation HADIN-KAI three weeks earlier.

In neighbouring Chad, armed youth suspected to be Boko Haram invaded the country's presidential palace at Ndjamena on the night of 9 January 2025 while President Mahamat Derby Itno was inside the palace and this culminated to the death of 18 attackers while six others and one Chadian soldier was also killed and three others wounded also demonstrate how daring terrorists in Africa has become.[77] Chad's Foreign Minister, Abderaman Koulamallah described the attack as a disordered and incomprehensible attempt to destabilise the country executed by 24 intoxicated individuals armed with knives, rather than guns and was fortunately foiled. He noted that the assailants "stabbed four guards, killing one and seriously injuring two others. A fourth guard was also injured, but his life is not in danger."[78] The widely held belief is that the attack was launched by members of the Boko Haram operating in the country.

[77] Cable News Network (CNN), "Attack on Chad's {residential Palace Leaves 19 Dead" 9 January 2025, https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/09/africa/chads-presidential-palace-attacked-intl/index.html (accessed 12 January 2025).

[78] Chris Ewokor and Christy Cooney, "Chad Foils Attempt to Destabilise Country – Minister" British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News 9 January 2025, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyky6l7pj5o (accessed 12 January 2025).

It is imperative to note that these audacious attacks are clear indication of the resilience of terrorist groups across Africa and further suggests that terrorist attacks would most certainly persist in the New Year 2025.

The continent of Africa will remain vulnerable to terrorist aggression and this has widened the security risks in the continent where extreme poverty, socio-economic setbacks and political underperformance continues to deepen grievances, mass frustrations and human miseries. These anomalies are continuously being exploited by terrorist groups for radicalisation and recruitment that sustain their existence as well as illicit transnational trafficking to sustain their existence. Specifically, the financing of terrorist groups in Africa is conducted through the illicit trafficking in SALWs and their ammunition, drug trafficking, illegal artisanal mining of stones, kidnapping for ransom and hostage taking including illegal bunkering of oil among others.

Israel-Palestine Conflict

The conduct of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood inside Israel on 7 October 2023 by the Iran-backed Palestinian group, HAMAS movement opened new conflict in the Middle East with new challenge that could heighten the challenge of terrorism in Africa. The incident involved the multipronged infiltration of Israeli territory through missile attacks and ground attacks killing, injuring and kidnapping of several persons of Israeli origin including the nationals of other countries. The HAMAS fighters raided the Israeli towns of Ofakim, Sederot and the Be'eri community, leading to the death of over 700 people while 2,382 others were treated in hospitals.[79] Israel's far reaching counter offensive in Gaza to track the attackers, rescue abducted victims and crush the HAMAS, sparked a regional conflict in the Middle East involving Iran's allies notably Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Yemen's Houthi militants which supported the HAMAS aggression against Israel. It is instructive to recall that the HAMAS emerged in 1987 during the Intifada (Uprising) as an

[79] Al Jazeera News, "What Happened in Israel? A Breakdown of How HAMAS Attack Unfolded" 7 October 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/7/what-happened-in-israel-a-breakdown-of-how-the-hamas-attack-unfolded (accessed 24 November 2024).

off-shoot of the Muslim Brotherhood's Palestinian branch that engaged in armed resistance against the Israeli occupation.[80]

The regional conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed Middle East groups has created widespread humanitarian situation in Gaza and deepening anti-Israeli sentiments across parts of Africa. This exposes Israeli interests in Africa to terror attacks by anti-Semitic groups in sympathy to the Palestinian course. The existence of several affiliates of global terrorist networks in addition to numerous local armed groups across Africa sympathetic to the Palestinian course alongside some Lebanese business interests in Africa who are pro-Hezbollah supporters remains instructive and could be exploited to target Israeli interests in Africa.

Furthermore, the series of attacks by the Yemen-based Houthi fighters on shipping vessels of interest to Israel in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden which were linked to Israel's military offensives in the Gaza province since the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood remains instructive. This is also coming at a period of credible United Nations Security Council intelligence indicates that the Houthi rebels, Hezbollah, HAMAS, Al-Qaeda and Somalia-based Al Shabaab maintain strategic alliance which has extended Houthi ability to strike ships in the Red Sea.[81]

Conclusion

Global baseline studies indicate that Africa and Asia are the two regions most affected by terrorism after the Middle East. Throughout 2024, the incidents of terrorism in Africa remained at all-time highs and this negative trend could most certainly escalate in 2025 especially with the drawdown of American and European forces in the Sahel. This assertion is reinforced by the shifting spread of the Al-Qaeda and IS affiliates to the central, southern and western parts of Africa. With the threat of terrorism cascading from the Maghreb to its south, the Sahel recorded the highest levels of violence in Africa, accounting for over half of activity on the continent in 2024. The deaths and injuries tripled with the threatening presence of the JNIM and the ISGS in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger as

[80] Linah Alsaafin, "What's the Israel-Palestine Conflict About? A Simple Guide" *Al Jazeera*, 9 October 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/9/whats-the-israel-palestine-conflict-about-a-simple-guide (accessed 30 January 2025).

[81] Richard Meade, "Houthi Threat to Shipping Growing, Thanks to Unprecedented Network of Support" *Lloyd's List*, 4 November 2024.

well as the emergence of the ISWAP and the Lakurawa terrorist group in Nigeria's northeast and northwest respectively. The activities of these groups clearly demonstrates the high vulnerability of African states to cross-border banditry and terrorism. The JNIM, ISGS and the ISWAP are highly networked and shares complementary ideological orientations linked to the global jihadi aspirations with roots in the MENA.

The exit of the United States and France from the Sahel States alongside the new alliance of pro-Azawad fighting groups could be exploited to the advantage of terrorist groups in the region. In addition, the increased of Russia's combat presence in West Africa has exposed the Sahel to covert superpower rivalries which could be exploited by hostile extra-continental interests to destabilise the Confederation of Sahel States.

Of utmost importance to counterterrorism engagements in Africa is the importance of Weapons and Ammunitions Management (WAM) with respect to all steps concerned with the oversight and governance control of arms and ammunitions. This includes national legislative frameworks and coordination mechanisms, procedures for acquisition, stockpiling, marking, transfers, end use control, processing, tracing and disposal.[82] As the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) persist across Africa, the challenge of WAM continue to pose threats to the security of states and terrorists exploit the ready accessibility to SALWs to unleash havoc across the continent. It is estimated that about 70% of terrorist attacks in 2022 were perpetrated through the use of SALWs.

Terrorist groups like the JNIM, ISGS, Boko Haram and the ISWAP rely mostly on these firearms for their raids on vulnerable communities and confrontation with various defence and security forces as well as government-recognised armed militia like the Civilian-Joint Task Force (C-JTF), Dana Ambassagou and Mossi Koglweogo, among others. Similarly, the Al-Qaeda, Al Shabbab and various Islamic State Wilayat across the continent also rely heavily on accessibility of SALWs in perpetrating their audacious and destabilising attacks in Africa.

The diversion of weapons from national armed forces, whether through capture in combat operations, looting of stockpiles and armouries, illicit purchase from unscrupulous military and security personnel, constitutes

[82] United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, CTED, (2025). "CTED Analytical Brief Weapons management challenges in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Africa" January, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/es/node/63707 (accessed 25 January 2025).

the primary source of SALWs used by terrorists in the Sahel. Arms proliferation in Africa continue to fuel terrorism and is exacerbated by poor WAM, persistence of armed conflicts, corruption and lack of proper accountability. Others are poor border control and governance, gaps in enforcement of legal frameworks guiding WAM and external interests.[83] The implication is that terrorist groups in Africa and especially the Sahel-Saharan belt, have since the Arab Spring in the MENA, leveraged on the violent collapse of the Ghadaffi regime, accompanying political instability and weakened oversight of WAM in Libya to divert SALWs from Libyan stockpiles.[84] It is instructive at this point to note that several weapons trafficked from the Sahel, have been traced to coastal states in West Africa and some are being used by pirates operating in the Gulf of Guinea. This speculation is deepened by the seizure of some significant quantities of firearms by police personnel in one of the Gulf of Guinea in 2021 comprising of 54 AK-type rifles, nine RPG-7-type rocket-propelled grenade launchers, three 35 mm grenade launchers, three 12.7 calibre heavy machine guns, three light machine guns, three submachine guns, one bolt action rifle, rounds of different types of ammunition for use in these firearms.[85]

The geography of terrorism in Africa has now engulfed the entire five regions and has since the 31st December attacks in Puntland continued to spread with audacious attacks on military and security forces in Nigeria and the Sahel as well as presidential palace in Chad, the rate of escalation in 2025 could exceed the 10 to 15 per -cent projection estimated by the African Union.[86] This prognosis is further informed by the prevailing security trends and dynamics across the globe including the domestic realities of individual African countries such as the crippling effects of unresolved conflict as well as their critical resource deficiencies for counterterrorism engagements.

Drawing from the above, it is imperative to sustain international cooperation to enable African countries, RECs and the African Union

[83] United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, (2022). "Firearms Trafficking in the Sahel" *Transnational Organised Crimes Threat Assessment – Sahel*, New York, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta_sahel/TOCTA_Sahel_firearms_2023.pdf (accessed 25 January 2025).

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Bankole Adeoye, Op. Cit.

to mobilise the requisite resources and assets needed to exorcise the scourge of terrorism. This requires that national, regional and continental commitments, counterterrorism engagements in Africa should be anchored on dedicated commitments to prevent, prepare, pursue and rebuild as expressed in the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Action against Terrorism (2013), otherwise known as the ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy as well as the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy (2006). By implication, efforts should be targeted at addressing those conditions conducive for the emergence and sustenance of terrorism. This requires robust engagement of all elements of national power and effective mobilisation of the population in national antiterrorism and counterterrorism endeavours of respective national governments. As a priority, national governments, regional and continental mechanisms in Africa should strengthen the role of effective research and intelligence-driven counterterrorism responses because terrorist organisations are constantly engaged in terrorism related research and intelligence processes that sustain their operations and survival.

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